THE Nation

AMERICA'S LEADING LIBERAL WEEKLY SINCE 1865

VOLUME 151 NEW YORK · SATURDAY · OCTOBER 19, 1940 NUMBER 16

The Shape of Things

EVERY TIGHT-ROPE WALKER HAS HIS BAD days, and perhaps we should not be too hard on the New York *Herald Tribune* for falling on its face. For years now its editors have performed a rather remarkable feat: though their typical reader has been a conservative commuter from Westchester, they have flaunted and on the whole lived up to the line from Voltaire which appears on the correspondence page. Last Monday, however, the commuter overcame Voltaire, and in a burst of blind suburban rage the sophisticated editors of the *Herald Tribune* suppressed a column by Dorothy Thompson which appeared as usual in at least a hundred other newspapers. On the previous Wednesday Miss Thompson had come out for Mr. Roosevelt, and the *Herald Tribune* seemed to be taking her heresy in its stride, though it printed column after column of letters from outraged readers, an alarming number of which called for the suppression of "that woman" who had come out for "that man" in the White House. Miss Thompson's column, ran the explanation of its non-appearance, "was devoted to an incomplete and inconclusive discussion of the Axis powers' attitude toward the American Presidential election. Taken by itself it seemed . . . misleading, tending to inject into the campaign an un-American issue." The explanation hinted that the column might yet be printed provided the "full development" of its thesis was forthcoming. It may have appeared by the time these lines are read. But the *Herald Tribune* has accomplished two things: it has injected into the campaign the "un-American issue" of censorship; and it has given Miss Thompson's point of view an even wider circulation than it might otherwise have had.

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DAVID SAPOSS HAS BEEN DISMISSED AND THE Economic Research Division of the National Labor Relations Board has been abolished. So ends one of Dies's pet campaigns to make America safe for violators of the Wagner Act. The persecution of David Saposs on the ground that he is a Communist despite conclusive evidence to the contrary may stand as a memorial to the Texan's rugged imperviousness to fact. It also offers vivid commentary on his real objectives. Thanks to the bogy which Dies and the Smith committee fashioned from the mild figure of a noted scholar in economics and labor history, the board's personnel has been cut twice this year. At a time when the volume of its work shows an increase of almost 20 per cent, the board's staff and appropriation have been reduced by 10 per cent. Had it not been for a last-minute fight by Senator Wagner, the rider to the Deficiency Appropriation bill which eliminated the Economic Research Division would have crippled enforcement of the act. For as passed by the House, this rider forbade the board to carry on any of the division's functions. This was too much even for a tory Democrat like Woodrum, who helped Wagner obtain a safeguarding clause in conference committee. Senators Barkley, McKellar, and Adams also deserve labor's thanks for the aid they gave to Wagner.

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WENDELL WILLKIE HAS BECOME SO LAVISH with his pledges that one wonders whether he has any expectation of having to redeem them. He promises to retain all the social gains of the New Deal. In addition, he has guaranteed a job in private industry to every unemployed man by undertaking to get 700,000 new enterprises started. This means an addition of some 35 per cent to the number of business concerns filing internal-revenue returns—a pretty tall order. He is not very specific, however, about how the new investment which such a business expansion would require is going to be brought about. One gathers that the principal agency is to be our old friend "growth of confidence." According to Mr. Willkie, capital refuses to go to work, not because of New Deal legislation—he approves of nearly all that—but because of the administrative errors of the New Dealers and their defeatist doctrines. Roosevelt's administrative record is certainly not perfect. But how many of the breakdowns have been caused by the persistent efforts of Mr. Willkie's business friends to nullify, circumvent, and sabotage the law? As to the charge of defeatism, this is the favorite theme of the

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reactionary press, which accuses New Dealers of losing faith in America because they declare that private enterprise has become stagnant. Attacking this belief, Mr. Willkie states, quite correctly, that a huge increase in production could be brought about by raising the standard of living. But he fails to recognize the relation of this huge volume of unfilled needs to the maldistribution of wealth. No one lacking understanding of the vicious circle into which private enterprise has worked itself can hope to cure unemployment, which, let us not forget, was a problem in 1929 when capitalist confidence was at its height.

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COMMUNIST PARTY CANDIDATES HAVE BEEN barred from the ballot in eleven states—Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, Washington, and West Virginia. In four states action was taken on the ground that the party favors overthrow of the American form of government; in others fraud in obtaining signatures to petitions was advanced as the reason. Grim stories have been authentically reported from all parts of the country illustrating the lawless and often violent methods that have been used to intimidate those who sign Communist petitions and to frame those who canvass for signatures. Such behavior is more dangerous to American democracy than the Communist Party ever was. No one who has been reading *The Nation* can believe that we think highly of the Communists, and we are filled with contempt for their thinly veiled efforts to keep the Socialists off the ballot in Illinois. But these are not the issues at stake. The old truth still holds that in an atmosphere of contempt for the law protection vanishes not only for Communists but for all of us. Vigilantes are notoriously unable to tell a single-taxer from an anarchist at five paces. The American people may one day decide that the Communist Party has cashed in a bit too much on this truth and that because of its slavish dependence on a foreign power it is unworthy of a place on the ballot. If and when they do, the party will be automatically and legally barred. Until then democrats owe it to themselves to cooperate with such organizations as the Committee on Election Rights (100 Fifth Avenue, New York) and the American Civil Liberties Union in defending the right of Communists to present their candidates to the electorate.

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TWENTY HONEST AND EARNEST YOUNG Christian pacifists at the Union Theological Seminary in New York have refused to register for the draft—even as conscientious objectors. Their purity of heart is transparent, but their intellectual condition seems to us a little cloudy. The draft act not only makes provision for excusing from active service all sincere religious objectors; it also specifically exempts ministers and students for the ministry whether their consciences demand it or not. But this very liberality is at the heart of the students' defiance. They don't want to be exempted. They want to object. And since the act deprives them of that opportunity, they are forced by the logic of their hatred for war and conscription to resist the one obligation laid upon them—the obligation to register. By taking this stand, which seems to us a form of libertarianism perilously close to anarchism, the students expose themselves to rigorous penalties. We don't know whether or not, in arriving at this stand, they have been counseled by pacifist or other organized groups. If so, we think a heavy responsibility rests on the shoulders of their advisers. It is the boys and not they who will go to jail.

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IF MAYOR JOSEPH K. CARSON OF PORTLAND, Oregon, is nominated to succeed Rear Admiral Henry A. Wiley on the United States Maritime Commission, we hope the Senate will order an open hearing before voting on confirmation. Mayor Carson is not so well known as he should be, but his career is well documented. The Labor Board decision in the Oregon Worsted Company case, the La Follette committee's report on the use of industrial munitions in strikes, its printed record of the labor-espionage activities of William J. Burns, the decision of Dean Landis in the Bridges case, the testimony of the Portland chief of detectives before the Dies committee on December 7, 1938, and the minutes of the public hearing held by the Portland City Council on the shooting of four pickets by police during the 1934 longshoremen's strike—these are all relevant, and revealing. Carson is both mayor and commissioner of police, and an examination of the material referred to indicates that he has been willing to go the limit in strike-breaking. The Senate may find particularly interesting the peculiar "bomb plot" and the more peculiar attitude of the Portland police toward it, as discussed in the Labor Board decision cited above. West Coast Congressmen in Washington have been quietly informed that "Carson's the man" to be named for the Maritime Commision vacancy, and the chambers of commerce on the coast are jubilant. The maritime unions, naturally, are doing their best to make that jubilation premature.

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ALTHOUGH ANTI-FASCIST REFUGEES ARE encountering unprecedented difficulties in entering the United States, this country appears to have opened its gates to royalty and ex-royalty from all parts of Europe. No one so far as we know has attempted a census or registration of resident royalty. But among those present are the former Empress Zita of Austria, her sons Archduke Otto and Archduke Felix, and a daughter, the Archduchess Elizabeth. Others are Prince Felix of Lux-

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embourg and his six children, who came on an American cruiser, and Crown Princess Martha of Norway and her children, who came on an army transport. Among the lesser lights is Countess Alexander Mercati, whose husband was grand marshal of the court of Greece. And the latest, but by no means least offensive, is Prince René de Bourbon of France, who has just arrived to join the Princess. In an hour's discourse with the press Prince René volunteered the opinion that "France had had her fill of a republic dominated by the masses and would return to a monarchical form of government." His attack on the fundamentals of democracy is particularly interesting in view of the zeal recently shown in Washington to exclude members of radical parties as potential members of a fifth column. We do not suggest the exclusion of royal refugees no matter how obnoxious their views may be, but it is fantastic that they should be given the asylum that is denied those who have sacrificed everything in the struggle against the new tyranny in Europe.

*

CUBA'S DICTATOR, FULGENCIO BATISTA, HAD his six-year rule legitimized last week when he was sworn in as the island's first President under the new constitution. Last-minute efforts by opposition groups to have the inaugural delayed until the protests against July's farcical elections were cleared up proved fruitless. In insisting on taking office on the date set in the new constitution, Colonel Batista overrode the provision in the constitution that the President shall be proclaimed by Congress. Owing to numerous unsettled protests, only a few members of Congress have been authorized to assume office. This prevented Congress from assembling as scheduled in September, a mishap of no real consequence since power under the constitution is concentrated largely in the hands of the President and his Cabinet. The next few months should provide, if nothing else, an interesting test of the sincerity of Batista's avowed conversion to liberal democracy from his former totalitarian practices.

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THE STATE OF FRANCE BECOMES MORE AND more pathetic. In his latest speech Marshal Pétain was supposedly informing his fellow-countrymen about their new constitution, but he failed to reveal any concrete particulars about the regime of the future. Instead, he indulged in those misty generalizations characteristic of fascist thought. He dismissed liberty as a worthless abstraction and equality as a false ideal, but promised a new national fraternity under a government which was to achieve the miraculous combination of liberty and authority. France, he said, had recognized the bankruptcy of economic liberalism and would now embark on the new economy, without, however, engaging in "a servile imitation of foreign experiments." With such vaporings the French people must content themselves until the end of the war, for only then, according to Foreign Minister Paul Baudouin, will the new constitution actually be promulgated. This, at least, is realism, for it is abundantly clear that if Germany wins the war, the political and economic future of France will be prescribed in Berlin, and neither Pétain nor any other Frenchman will have anything to say but *Ja.* Pétain himself admitted this, in effect, when he appealed to the conquerors for generosity, saying, "Germany can choose between the traditional peace of oppression and a wholly new peace of collaboration. . . . In the presence of a conqueror who knows how to dominate his victory we shall know how to dominate our defeat." As the old Marshal said once before in a momentary flash of honesty, the Nazis have put a cord around his neck and are constantly pulling tighter.

Drang Nach Osten

AS GERMAN troops and arms pour into Rumania, the outline of the strategy agreed upon by Hitler and Mussolini at the Brenner becomes fairly clear. Bucharest is important as a station on the way to Suez, but as a barricade against any further Russian advance in Europe it is vital. And if the British position in the Near East is to be outflanked, an essential preliminary is to forestall any possibility of Soviet interference. The planting of strong military and air forces at the mouth of the Danube is both a warning and challenge to Stalin, and the expressive silence of the Moscow press bears testimony to the extent of the dilemma in which the Kremlin now finds itself.

When Russia marched into Bessarabia at the end of June, Germany was successfully concluding the Battle of France and preparing for another *Blitzkrieg* across the Channel which, it was hoped, would bring the war to an end before the fall. Hence Berlin, while obviously displeased by the Soviet move, chose to pretend that it had been consulted beforehand and had given its approval. Meanwhile Rumania's other neighbors with territorial claims against it, Hungary and Bulgaria, started to turn on the heat. They received some encouragement from Germany, but the latter made it clear that its chief desire was to avoid any disturbance in the Balkans. At one point Berlin is believed to have declared that the Transylvanian question must remain in abeyance until after the war. Then, at the end of August, incidents began to multiply along the new Russo-Rumanian border, and a new Soviet advance seemed imminent. At that moment the Axis, with hope of a speedy victory in the West fading, ordered the Hungarian and Rumanian governments to submit their dispute to arbitration, and the Vienna award was promulgated. This handed over the whole Carpa-

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thian wall to Hungary and provided Rumania with a full guaranty of its remaining borders.

Writing in *The Nation* on September 14, Louis Fischer foretold the occupation of Rumania by the Reichswehr and pointed out that Germany was now in a position to put light naval forces on the Black Sea. "If Russia accepts the new situation passively," he said, "Soviet expansion in the Balkans is at an end." There was no immediate reaction from Moscow, but also there was no immediate movement of Nazi troops down the Danube. This was because the Axis was attending to another detail—the completion of the tripartite pact, which not only offered a threat to the United States but also neatly isolated the Soviet Union.

The dangers of appeasing Hitler must by now be fairly obvious to Stalin. It is true that the Nazi-Soviet pact has brought some large rewards by making possible the reincorporation of most of the lost czarist domains. But important as these gains are, the price was heavy if it means a threat to the security of Russia's own *mare nostrum*—the Black Sea. Nor is this security menaced merely by German forces at the mouth of the Danube. Much more serious is the probability that Hitler's grand strategy will necessitate an early attempt to seize the Dardanelles. If he succeeds, Russia's only remaining open window to the west will be Murmansk, and in this connection the concentration of German troops reported in the far north of Norway appears ominous.

It is hardly surprising that in these circumstances there are rumors of a defensive alliance among Turkey, Greece, and Yugoslavia, with Russia participating in the negotiations. Yet it would also be surprising if these talks achieved any convincing results. Yugoslavia is almost wholly surrounded now by Axis forces, and Greece, already threatened by Italy from Albania, may at any moment be attacked in the rear by Bulgaria, which is hoping to win access to the Aegean and is willing to pay a stiff price for Axis assistance. Assured of real support from Russia, Turkey would perhaps go to the aid of Greece, and almost certainly the Turks will fight if their own soil is invaded. They have a fairly large army of good fighting quality, but their material is no match for that of the Germans, and without strong support they could hardly hope to hold the Straits for very long. But where is that support to come from? Britain presumably can lend some naval aid, but only Russia can provide really effective assistance.

That Russia has a paramount interest in keeping the Straits out of German hands is beyond dispute. Yet it is very doubtful whether Stalin is ready to risk war with the Axis at this time. That would mean a test of the Soviet army, the Soviet economy, and the Soviet leadership which he may well wish to postpone, hoping the prolonged British resistance will eventually provide a more favorable opportunity.

Free Speech and Ford

THE National Labor Relations Board has won two more major victories in the courts. The United States Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston has upheld its order against Bethlehem Steel, and the Circuit Court in Cincinnati has granted enforcement of its order against Ford in the Dearborn case. But the Circuit Court in Cincinnati ruled against the board on one of the points raised in the Dearborn case, and this exception, if upheld by the Supreme Court, threatens to open a loophole of considerable size in the Wagner Act. The exception involves the question of the limits of an employer's freedom of speech in labor relations, and the court's interpretation of this right seems to us dangerously broad. The facts and the issues involved have been so distorted in the daily press as to demand careful consideration at this time.

The Labor Board order, which the Cincinnati court declines to enforce, did not forbid Ford to say anything he liked about unionism. It merely required him to desist from circulating his views on labor unions among his employees in a manner calculated to interfere with their right to organize themselves as they pleased. The order was issued because the circumstances under which anti-union literature was distributed in the Ford plant and the manner in which it was distributed seemed to the board part of a campaign to prevent Ford workers from joining a union. The literature containing Ford's views was given out while a campaign to organize the plant was under way. Ordinarily at the Ford plant literature is placed in boxes near the entrance, and employees are free to take it or not. In this case members of Ford's strong-arm squad, the so-called "service department," forced every employee to take a copy. The uncontradicted testimony showed that workers took the literature because they were afraid that if they didn't their number would be noted, and they might be discharged. The conditions of terrorism and espionage under which Ford employees work and the discriminatory discharges common in his plants made that fear appear to the board as a reasonable one. The "service men" handing out the literature were the same men who have handed out the beatings to union members. When they give an employee an anti-union leaflet by Ford, it is not likely to be mistaken for an invitation to engage in a theoretical discussion of the merits of trade unionism.

"The right to form an opinion," the Circuit Court says in objecting to this part of the board's order, "is of little value if such opinion may not be expressed, and the right to express it is of little value if it may not be communicated to those immediately concerned." But the workers' freedom of organization is endangered if the employer is free to thrust into their hands leaflets ex-

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pressing his strong disaproval of unionism. "The position of the employer," as the Seventh Circuit Court said in the Falk Corporation case, ". . . carries such weight and influence that his words may be coercive when they would not be so if the relation of master and servant did not exist." The employer's right to unlimited free speech conflicts in this area with the employee's right to bargain collectively. Congress has decided that in collective as in other kinds of bargaining there can be a real bargain only when each side is independent.

The realities of the case also invalidate the court's second line of argument: "the servant no longer has occasion to fear the master's frown of authority or threats of discrimination . . . express or implied." The facts demonstrate the effectiveness of the frown. That Ford was not merely engaging in abstract debate is proved by the punishment dealt out to workers who tried to take the other side in it. At least three of the men reinstated by both the board and the court had been fired for exercising their freedom of speech in favor of unionism. In one case the foreman, who hated to lose a good workman, said, "Well, George, God damn it, I warned you, and warned you to keep your mouth shut." In another a man was discharged two hours after he asked his foreman to read an article in the Detroit *Free Press* in which an employer was quoted as saying that his employees were free to join a union. The employer was Henry Ford.

War in the Far East?

THE State Department's warning to Americans to leave China and the Japanese Empire as quickly as possible indicates that Washington regards recent developments in the Far East as extremely grave. There are whispers that we shall be at war with Japan before the end of the year. Already steps have been taken to strengthen our Pacific defense. Battleship crews are being brought to war strength. A detachment of the California National Guard is being dispatched to Hawaii to reinforce the anti-aircraft defenses.

All this is slightly bewildering to the average citizen. He has no difficulty in recognizing the threat offered by Hitler. But Japan is a long way off, and there seems little, apart from the recent Axis alliance, to suggest immediate danger in the Far East. The only really ominous signs on the horizon are the extraordinary measures taken by the Japanese military after the Chinese puppet-mayor of Shanghai was killed. On the surface Japan would seem merely to be pursuing the career of conquest begun in 1931 and speeded up since 1937.

If Japan were acting alone, recent events would not be cause for alarm. It is the fact that the Axis powers are cooperating in a long-range program directed primarily against the United States that gives significance to each hostile gesture. The United States must be on its guard lest effective Japanese moves against China or the British possessions deprive us of the cooperation which minimizes Japan's threat to this country.

Although prophecies are dangerous, it seems safe to say that Axis plans do not call for an immediate attack on American possessions or on primary American interests in the Far East. One cannot rule out the possibility of a crisis over some explosive issue such as the policing of Shanghai, but in Axis strategy tests of strength with a powerful enemy are usually avoided. For the moment Japan has its hands full in Indo-China, and it is likely that the Tokyo military clique will consolidate its position there before attempting a further advance in the South Seas. Then step by step Japan would prepare for an eventual showdown with the United States.

There are indications that the Administration is at least determined that this strategy shall not serve Japan against the United States with the effectiveness that it served Hitler against the European democracies. It is reported that the American embargo will shortly be extended to include machine tools, and possibly copper and automotive tools. The evacuation of Americans from the Far East is a warning to Japan that this country is prepared, if worst comes to worst, to defend its interests by armed force. If the United States takes a strong stand and abandons the halfway measures which have characterized its Far Eastern policy, it will undoubtedly be risking war—the Japanese militarists may want the showdown now rather than after the new American naval program has got fully under way. But that is a chance we must take. We have had abundant evidence that a policy of compromise, appeasement, and retreat leads not only to war but to a war under the worst possible conditions for the appeaser. A firm stand against Japan today might not avert war, but it would at least help to avert defeat. An unconquered China is more important than battleships to our Pacific defenses.

Reports from Tokyo indicate that the exceptional measures taken by the United States in the past few weeks, instead of aggravating the tension, have made Japan hesitate. This is in line with all past experience. The United States still has the power to injure Japan economically and militarily through the imposition of an absolute trade embargo. In 1918 we forced Japan to withdraw the bulk of its troops from Siberia by refusing to sell it cotton or to buy its silk. Similar action today, supported by an arrangement with Britain for the use of naval bases in the South Seas, would find Japan far less able to resist, militarily or economically, than in 1918. War with Japan may yet result from the weakness and blunders of our policy in the last few years, but the chief danger lies in a continuation of those errors rather than in a belated attempt to defend our interests.

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Campaign Notes

BY FREDA KIRCHWEY

TO PRETEND that the President's defense-inspection trips have no political purpose or significance would be idiotic. Every time he moves, speaks, or shows his face he is asking the confidence and votes of the people; and it is to be assumed that he plans his trips with due consideration of the political importance of the territory through which he travels. But to charge, as Willkie does, that Mr. Roosevelt's inspections are only a slightly camouflaged form of electioneering and to demand that he quit pretending and jump openly into the campaign—these are themselves campaign tricks unworthy of a decent candidate. Just suppose for a moment that the President had acted as Willkie demands. Suppose he had stumped the country answering accusations, defending the acts of his Administration, debating here and there with his Republican opponent. Suppose he had stayed away from his desk at Washington for the length of time Willkie has been on tour. Suppose he had failed to visit and inspect those centers of defense production within easy reach. What would Mr. Willkie have said then? We can hear his loud charges that the President, in hot pursuit of a third term, had ruthlessly and shamefully subordinated to the demands of electioneering the job of steering the country through one of the greatest crises of its history.

THE CHARGE that Willkie must be infected with race prejudice because his grandparents were German immigrants and because Elwood, Indiana, set up barriers to the settlement of Negroes is as unconvincing as it is contemptible. Its prompt repudiation by several leading Democrats, including Lieutenant Governor Poletti of New York and Chairman Flynn himself, should do something to offset the effect of the attack—not on Wendell Willkie but on the Democratic ticket. But the New York *Herald Tribune's* attempt to prove that this miserable abortion was a legitimate offspring of the campaign speeches by Wallace and Lehman is almost as far-fetched as the fantastic contents of the leaflet itself. The assertion that Europe's dictators hope for the defeat of Roosevelt is a plain truth, however little Willkie has done to merit their preference. The charge that Willkie himself harbors Nazi race theories is an equally plain lie. This constitutes a difference in kind which the *Herald Tribune* should be able to recognize even in the heat of battle.

THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH last Saturday on hemisphere defense has already been characterized as "political" by his squeamish opponents. Most certainly it made votes for the speaker, and this in itself constitutes a transgression of Republican campaign ethics. It made votes because it was courageous, high-minded, and persuasive—in the finest vein of American political oratory. Indeed, it was difficult to imagine an American who had listened to that speech going off to vote for Wendell Willkie. It made Willkie's image shrink to proportions that would look rather absurd in the large dimensions of the Presidential office. Every word bespoke vision and grasp and determination. Without alarmist prophecies, the President promised the Americas a full measure of support from the United States in a total defense of the hemisphere on two seas. He promised to forswear appeasement. And he held out the hope that firmness combined with power and backed by the collective will of all the American nations would suffice to block the plans of the Axis. These are not new ideas, but they carry new portents. On fronts around the world a mighty struggle is taking shape, the outcome of which may depend upon the decisions of the United States today and tomorrow. The President's words were understood in Rome and Berlin and Tokyo. I hope they were also understood in this country.

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Defense and the Wagner Act

BY I. F. STONE

Washington, October 14

MR. ROOSEVELT is a master of the art of changing the subject, and his skill in this important branch of politics is being applied to the explosive question of whether companies violating the Wagner Act shall continue to be given defense contracts. On this issue there is silence at the White House and pained embarrassment at the Defense Commission. Mr. Hoover's favorite device as a statesman was to appoint a commission of inquiry and pray the subject would be forgotten before a report could be made. The Administration is trying similar tactics. One is told (off the record) that nothing can be said (off the record) because a subcommittee of Defense Commission lawyers has been assigned to study the question. No effort will be made to hasten their deliberations; it is hoped that the lawyers will continue splitting hairs until after the election. Whether this is possible depends on Mr. Roosevelt's ability to placate Mr. Knudsen without too far antagonizing Mr. Lewis, and vice versa—no easy feat. The crawl that Attorney General Jackson and Defense Commissioner Hillman were forced to execute before the sadistic Smith committee last week can only be understood in the light of this precarious necessity. It is feared that if an attempt is made to enforce the Wagner Act on defense contracts Mr. Knudsen will pick up his marbles and come out for Willkie. It is likewise feared that if an attempt is *not* made to enforce the Wagner Act on defense contracts Mr. Lewis may stage a walkout of his followers from Mr. Hillman's labor advisory committee or call a general strike in Bethlehem Steel.

All this might have been avoided if the New Deal had shown more courage in the past. The Labor Relations Board since 1936 and the C. I. O. since its organization have sought to bar Wagner Act violators from government contracts. A bill to that effect was introduced by Senator Wagner early in 1938, and although William Green—who has since changed his mind—helped to block its passage, similar measures have twice passed the Senate and once the House. Clever parliamentary footwork and the House Rules Committee always managed to prevent enactment. The Administration would neither put up a fight for these bills nor agree to Mr. Lewis's repeated request for an Executive Order requiring observance of the Wagner Act on government contracts. The demand was renewed when Mr. Hillman was named to the Defense Commission, and some concession on this basic labor issue became necessary. The first step was the statement of labor policy unanimously adopted by the commission on August 31. "All work carried on as part of the defense program," it said, "should comply with federal statutory provisions affecting labor . . . the Walsh-Healey Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, the National Labor Relations Act, etc." The second was the adoption on September 6 of general principles to govern the letting of defense contracts. "Adequate consideration," these instructions said, "must be given to labor. This means compliance with the principles on this subject stated by the commission in its release of August 31." If plain words mean what they seem to, this was a guaranty of justice to labor in the defense program.

Mr. Lewis expressed his satisfaction on September 16 and inquired what procedure should be followed "in advising the commission of the corporations which are violating the labor laws in order that these corporations be precluded from receiving government contracts until they comply with the mandate of the law." Mr. Hillman took up the question. On October 1 he released letters from Secretary of the Navy Knox and Assistant Secretary of the Navy Patterson saying they were working out the procedure "whereby the substance . . . of the aforesaid principles and the statement of labor policy . . . is properly made a condition of all contracts to be awarded."

Mr. Hillman's demeanor when he gave these statements to the press was that of a man who had won a great victory; and so it seemed. It is now clear in retrospect that he would have been better advised to wait for the procedural regulations promised. Instead, accepting these pledges at their face value, and in good faith, he went on to the other question raised: Would a company asking for a defense contract be held in violation of the Wagner Act as soon as the Labor Board so ruled, or would it be able to go on getting government work until a final decision was handed down on appeal? Mr. Knudsen, at best no Wagner Act enthusiast, thought the commission, if it acted at all, should wait for the courts. That might, with good fortune, take several years, and in the meantime Bethlehem, Ford, and du Pont could enjoy the benefit of the doubt, and defense contracts.

When Attorney General Jackson ruled to the contrary, big business sprang to arms with a celerity it has yet to show in the manufacture of planes or the production of armorplate. The press—with honorable exceptions—has rarely staged a more effective campaign of misrepresentation. The Jackson ruling was made public on Thursday, October 3. By the following Tuesday Mr.

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Jackson was explaining to the Smith committee that he had merely been answering a theoretical problem in elementary administrative law; and Mr. Hillman, that he hadn't said nothin'. The War and Navy departments revealed that they had never taken the declaration of labor policy seriously. To Assistant Secretary of War Patterson it was only "one of a dozen factors or so that are to be taken into consideration by the contracting officers to work out." Secretary of the Navy Knox agreed. The War and Navy departments did not intend to let the Labor Board or the Attorney General decide for them. "We would have to take into account in any case going before the Labor Board," Judge Patterson said, "how serious the thing was, the stage of the proceeding—whether it had been concluded or whether it was on appeal—and so forth." The Attorney General was forced to say that it was no concern of his "if the defense-contracting authorities decide to deal with men who are in violation of the [Wagner] act." Mr. Hillman's bitterest moment came when he was asked whether he agreed with Patterson and Knox that nothing in the statement of labor policy, the decision of the Attorney General, "or any implications that could be drawn from it" prohibits the War or Navy Department from giving defense contracts to firms which are not obeying the Wagner Act. "I have to agree with whatever they think is their opinion," Mr. Hillman answered, "because they have the power to award contracts."

New Dealers understand the importance of the common man's morale in defense, and there is anguish over this humiliating acquiescence in industrial arrogance. They solace themselves with the belief that all will be different after election, and this vision of pie in the November sky is held with Messianic fervor. It may be justified. But one test of whether appeasement of big business will end after November will be what Mr. Roosevelt does about that vacancy on the Labor Board. I am reliably informed that Mr. Madden will not be reappointed. This does not sound to me as if the cooperative commonwealth were just around the corner.

Can the Empire Save Great Britain?

BY ALBERT VITON

THE next five months will undoubtedly prove crucial in the struggle for the Mediterranean. The present lull in Africa signifies only that Graziani is determined to live up to his reputation as an extremely realistic, if somewhat impetuous, soldier. He is not likely to outrun his line of communications. On the other hand, it can be taken for granted that he will make every effort to reach the inhabited parts of Egypt before next summer. Graziani knows from long experience in desert warfare that if the British succeed in holding his legions anywhere west of Marsa Matruh, he will have lost the African campaign. No army can survive in that desert during the burning summer, which begins in March and continues without a drop of rain till November. But can the British block his advance?

It is not easy to give an optimistic answer. The British are confronting conditions which no one could have foreseen even a year ago. Betrayed by friends and allies, they are completely isolated in the Mediterranean. The greatest and least expected blow was of course the collapse of France's Mediterranean front. But other friends have proved no more reliable. Fear and internal political considerations have prompted Greece, Turkey, Egypt, Iraq, and other Arab lands to proclaim their neutrality, or even to build bridges to the Reich.

Pre-war plans were based on the idea that the standing French colonial forces would hold the lines until the British Empire could swing into action. It was foreseen that it would take at least a year for the demilitarized empire to be able to make use of its immense human and material resources. Some 100,000 French troops were therefore concentrated in Syria and probably twice as many in the colonies west of Libya, plus 1,000 airplanes. The troops in Syria were to defend the Suez Canal against the expected attack, while the Tunisian forces slowly made their way into Libya. That Italy would march first against Egypt was common knowledge from the summer of 1939 on. As I then reported in *The Nation,* Marshal Badoglio had returned from his tour of inspection in Libya convinced that the Tunisian fortifications could not be stormed. British forces in the Near East at the time of Italy's entrance into the war did not exceed 60,000 to 75,000 men.

Only in the light of these facts is it possible to understand the problems created by the defection of France. The defense plan collapsed within forty-eight hours, and the British were left to face the whole force of the Italian armies, which numbered more than 200,000 men in Libya alone. At the same time they lost the services of the French fleet, which was supposed to patrol the western Mediterranean and cooperate in cutting Italy's communications with Africa, and had to send invaluable troops to guard the Syro-Palestinian frontier. Fortunately Marshal Balbo was not prepared to risk a campaign in

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the desert during the burning months of last summer.

Hopes of reconstructing the French Mediterranean front were doomed from the beginning to disappointment. I do not believe the story that the high command in Syria wavered until General Weygand arrived and persuaded them to abide by Vichy's decisions. Anyone who has had any contact with French colonial administrations in recent years knows that the most reactionary elements were in control long before September, 1939. I found French fascists in the highest posts in the Syrian and Lebanese governments as early as 1935, as I then reported in *The Nation*. In the following year French army officers began to organize native Christian fascist groups. An Arabic socialist daily, *Saut esh-Shab,* or the *Voice of the People,* which was edited by friends of mine, was suppressed first for three months and then *sine die* for publishing documents proving conclusively the connection between local fascist groups, masquerading as Lebanese patriots, and French officers. Later reports from the former editors of this paper show that the French continued these activities in 1938 and 1939.

The collapse of France had a powerful effect in Athens and Ankara. There was a visible change in Greek public opinion, which had previously been loudly critical of the pro-Axis policies of the dictator, General Metaxas. Mussolini's attacks on Greek ships early in August did much to check the drift, but it is important to notice that it was to Berlin that Metaxas turned for help. Ankara has been more faithful and has not broken away from the British alliance, but unfortunately Ankara has to watch not only Berlin but Moscow.

The Arabs and Egyptians have also proved to be fair-weather friends. All the weaknesses of Arab society have been uncovered during the past few months. British attempts to forge a united Near Eastern front have foundered on the rocks of petty dynastic jealousies and personal rivalries among the leaders. Egypt has been torn by factional struggles; the palace clique, led by King Farouk himself, being violently opposed to participation in the war. Ibn Saud has tried to exploit the present emergency to blackmail Britain into making territorial concessions; and the rulers of Iraq have tried to grind a few axes of their own.

It is not that the Near East has become pro-Axis. On the contrary, German and Italian propaganda, though very active and abundant, is not making converts, and the overwhelming majority of Mediterranean peoples fully realize that an Axis victory would spell their enslavement. The Axis has not succeeded in fomenting any anti-British movement in the Near East. Italian reports of an imminent uprising among the Arabs led by Ibn Saud represent nothing but wishful thinking. Fascist propaganda has scored in other ways. Tales of Britain's imminent collapse pour out of Berlin and Bari, accompanied by threats of the dire consequences that will follow even the slightest aid to Britain. And these threats have not fallen on deaf ears. Speakers in the Egyptian Parliament have openly argued that neutrality now would be rewarded by the Axis powers after the war.

Britain's present weakness, however, is not all due to extraneous circumstances. Uncertainty and lack of vision have characterized British policy. Many persons who had for years opposed Lord Lloyd's reactionary imperialist policies greeted with joy his inclusion in the Churchill Cabinet, hoping that he would live up to his reputation as a "strong" man and would infuse some life into colonial officialdom. As far as the Near East is concerned, these hopes have not been justified. All the empire's wealth cannot win a single battle unless converted into guns, airplanes, and shells; its man power is no asset unless converted into mechanics, soldiers, and pilots. The metamorphosis has not yet been made, in the Near East or in any other part of the empire. Of course the difficulties in the way have been immense. It is no easy matter to train Indians or colonial peoples generally for modern warfare; it is even more difficult to turn them into good mechanics. Every part of the empire suffers from the absence of metallurgical industries: skilled labor is lacking, and dies have to be imported. Yet the fact remains that the empire could have contributed far more than it has. The situation in the Near East would be different if instead of a few thousand Indian troops tens of thousands had been available, or if a real attempt had been made to utilize the local population and local resources.

I do not think much has been lost by the failure of Egypt and the various Arab states to cooperate effectively, although it is a sad commentary on British management that so far not one Arab state has declared war on the fascist aggressors. All those states are hopelessly weak; their armies are not mechanized; their combined air forces amount to only slightly more than 100 planes. I believe, though, that Britain might have made good use of the various minority groups, especially the Zionists. These groups—Assyrians, Armenians, Zionists, and others—are far better educated than the Arabs, and they make better disciplined and more hardy fighters. To train them for mechanized fighting would have been comparatively easy. No less important, the Zionists have an industrial machine which could have been used for the manufacture of munitions, as well as a large body of highly skilled labor for the expansion of war industries.

Long before the outbreak of the war, in 1935 to be exact, the Zionists offered to place in the field a modern army if Britain would permit the men to land in Palestine. London was not interested. Since hostilities began the Zionists have repeatedly renewed the offer to raise 100,000 men for fighting anywhere in the Near East. Unfortunately, romantic illusions about the power of the Arabs and the fear of political complications have made

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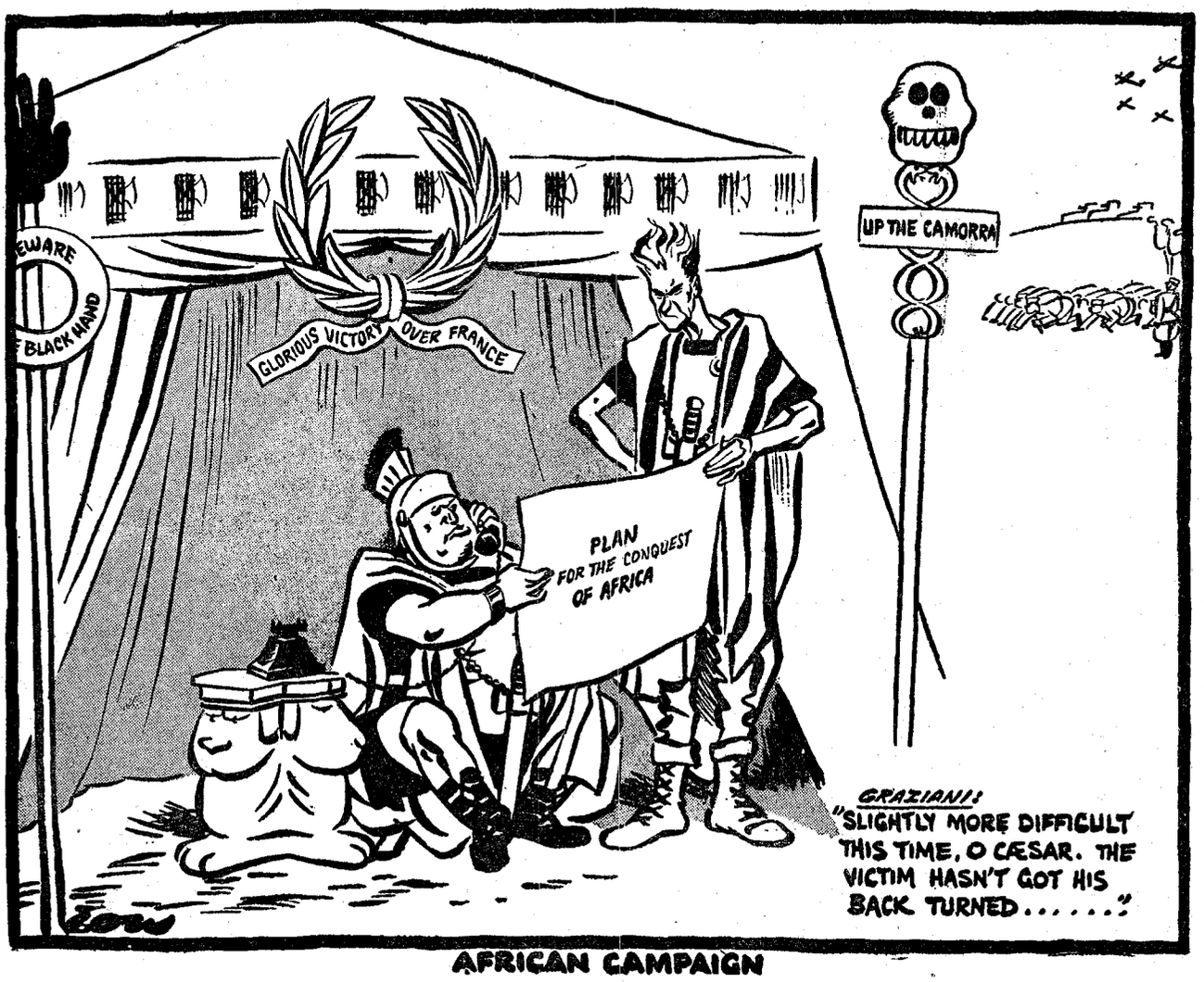
the British reject all those offers with scorn. Nor has London taken advantage of numerous suggestions for the local production of munitions. As a result, every soldier in the Near East and every bullet he uses have to be transported thousands of miles.

Today the British forces are short of men and munitions. They still number less than 200,000 men, distributed over an immense area. The destructive Italian air raids on Palestinian cities reveal the lack of anti-aircraft guns and fighter planes. As far as I know, not a single military airdrome from which fighters could intercept Italian bombers has been constructed near Tel Aviv, and until a few months ago that city of 150,000 was even without air-raid shelters.

In the meantime, the Italians have made solid advances. Their conquest of Somaliland was important only from the point of view of prestige, but their activities in Syria and in Yemen may have military importance. And if the British retreat to Marsa Matruh was tactical and nothing of importance was lost, it is equally true that nothing was gained. The 300-mile-wide desert which stretches from Alexandria to the Libyan frontier offers nowhere a natural line of defense. The old line was as good as the new one, and had the added advantage of keeping from sixty to eighty miles more of desert between Graziani's air bases and the Suez Canal. The Italian armies on the Abyssinian-Sudanese border may also strike before long.

Britain's position is without doubt serious, but I do not feel that it is hopeless. And it contains certain elements of solid strength. In the first place, the British have tremendous strategic advantages; secondly, they still control all lines of communication; and thirdly, while Axis supplies of cotton and various vital metals are constantly decreasing, Britain's military supplies will be greatly augmented during the next year by shipments from the empire and from this country. Finally, there is Mussolini's known reluctance to use up all his military material in a few great battles; Il Duce does not relish the possibility of facing a victorious Germany with nothing but the end of the Axis in his hands. Even less does he want German cooperation in the African campaign. To keep Hitler as far as possible from the Mediterranean has been one of the chief planks of fascist foreign policy in recent years. But whether Mussolini will be able to refuse German military aid if the campaign turns out to be more difficult than is anticipated in Rome is another matter.

The outlook for Britain would become worse should Spain be dragged into the war. Commanded by artillery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UP THE CAMORRA
GRAZIANI:
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AFRICAN CAMPAIGN

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installed since 1937, the Bay of Gibraltar would become a death trap and the fleet would have to leave. The town and harbor works could be demolished in a very short time, though capture of the great subterranean fortifications of the Rock would be extremely difficult. Its long range guns would still command the straits, and the British navy would still be in the Atlantic to continue the blockade.

To drive the British out of Malta would be even more difficult; the rugged shores of this island do not lend themselves to landings. Until now Britain has made very little use of Malta, for the Grand Harbor, which is only some sixty miles from Sicilian airdromes, has become almost entirely useless as a naval base, but the island could be converted into an air base of immense strategic value. What Britain needs to exploit Malta's strategic location is hundreds of bombers and dozens of good airdromes. At present the first cannot be spared from the western theater of war, and the airdromes, which will have to be equipped with subterranean hangars, have not yet been built. If the day ever comes when Britain is able to take full advantage of the situation of this colony, Mussolini will have reason for regretting his great gamble.

Must Defense Wreck Housing?

BY CHARLES ABRAMS

PUBLIC housing is in grave danger of being laid to rest—paradoxically, in the name of defense. The army, the navy, and the Defense Commission say that 200,000 houses are needed at once for workers on the defense program—the houses can be used for slum dwellers when the emergency is over. The United States Housing Authority and the local public authorities acting under it are the only agencies equipped to build and manage them. Yet when the USHA is needed most it is to be scuttled. Responsibility for defense housing is now to be split, and the work is to be parceled out to at least four federal bodies completely unequipped for the job. The War Department, the Navy, and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation have already been authorized to take it over. The Federal Works Administration too will now build houses through other agencies.

Three years ago the Housing Authority was set up as a permanent agency to carry out a long-range slum-clearance program. Like previous housing agencies it has had a varied career. Nathan Straus, the first administrator under the new program, was actually the fifth official to administer housing in six years. He was faced with the problem of decentralizing the PWA's housing operations and perfecting legislation in every state where new local agencies were to be created to build projects. He had to determine the needs and approve the operations of these agencies and fix maximum and minimum dwelling standards. As a result of his efforts, in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties, 500 city agencies with trained personnel are in existence today, and their ability to do their job is demonstrated by more than 150 projects. The transfer of housing from the centralized PWA to the decentralized USHA has brought increased speed, efficiency, and economy: legal bottlenecks have been eliminated; practical norms as to materials, room sizes, land coverage, and density have been formulated. In fact, seventeen defense projects of local authorities under the USHA have already been approved by the President, and some are under way. Yet this setup is now to be scrapped.

Public housing is a depression baby. When business was in the doldrums and something had to be done to revive the moribund building industry, housing for the underprivileged, which up to then had been viewed as an "un-American form of benevolent paternalism," suddenly became acceptable. Both the RFC and the PWA prepared plans to stimulate the materials industries and give employment to the building trades. But the RFC, which made loans to private builders, found builders were no philanthropists, and the PWA, which undertook to build housing projects directly, found its operations a failure and soon joined the chorus favoring construction through local authorities.

With this background, the USHA was set up to subsidize city agencies to rehouse the people of the slums. Thirty-eight states passed enabling legislation; more than 150 authorities were set up each year. Favorable court decisions upheld slum clearance and housing as proper governmental purposes in twenty-five states. Cities granted tax exemption averaging two and a half times the minimum required by federal statute. Livable housing for 160,000 slum families was being built. The average cost of dwelling facilities was more than $667 below the statutory maximum in small cities, more than $1,359 below maximum in the larger ones. The over-all costs per home were driven down to $500 below private large-scale building costs. Buildings were completed in as short a time as four months from the approval date.

For those who opposed public housing all this was too dangerous a precedent. The building and loan associations, the real-estate boards, and the United States Cham-

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ber of Commerce viewed housing as an invasion of private enterprise. The more remarkable the success of the local agencies in clearing the slums, the stronger grew the opposition in Congress. That opposition took two forms. The first was resistance to the enactment of appropriations in Washington and in the states where local enabling legislation had to be passed. When that was overcome, efforts were made to impede the program by inserting unworkable restrictions in the legislation. But the great opportunity to destroy it came in 1940.

When the defense program got under way, provision had to be made for housing workers in army and navy posts and skilled workers in factories. In the last war, with more homes available than now, the Secretary of War found that lack of housing facilities "menaced the quick preparing of ships and war materials." Now, with defense operations hardly begun, similar reports come in from all parts of the country. In Bremerton, Washington, men, women, and children are sleeping in the jail, on the grass in the city park, in parked automobiles, on makeshift beds in garages and in tents. Rents there have risen three times in one year. In Rock Island, Illinois, arsenal workers are refusing employment because they cannot find houses. In Youngstown, Ohio, shacks are being built out of boxes. The naval station in Key West, Florida, has not a single house for the families of its men. Workers in Western military posts are paying 50 per cent of their wages for rent. While in the country as a whole vacancies still exist because families have doubled up, there are now, for the first time since the post-war housing famine, more families than homes. In many cities affected by war orders the situation is more critical than it was during the World War.

For a time these developments made it appear that public housing would go on despite the opposition. Events have proved, however, that there are more ways than one to scotch a progressive movement. The USHA was attacked as inefficient. Local authorities were charged with extravagance. It was said openly that Congress would pass no bills giving funds to the USHA, defense or no defense. A provision permitting the War and Navy departments to employ the USHA was struck out in conference. Under the Lanham bill the FWA is permitted to employ the local authorities through the USHA on a contractual arrangement, but even this is prevented by the political situation. For the officials in charge of FWA and the Housing Coordinator of the Defense Commission both fear the wrath of a Congressional bloc that seems to be having its own way with social and defense legislation. They declare that the USHA has no support in certain committees, that the defense program is their most vital concern at the moment, and that they cannot risk opposition. Some say that this opposition exists because Straus failed to employ the utmost tact in dealing with committee members, but those who have fought for housing from the beginning know that the hostility is more deeply rooted.

From the social standpoint, and even from the standpoints of efficiency and economy, the result may be disastrous. The new agencies have never built houses. Unlike the local authorities, they have no qualified employees save those they can entice away from the existing housing agencies. They must begin anew negotiations for local cooperation in matters of streets, sewers, water utilities, tax exemption. They must select sites, draw plans, establish standards, and devise new procedures in the hundreds of problems which the local agencies had already worked out. All this will conflict with the city-planning arrangements made by the cities in connection with their own long-term housing programs. Local opposition will burst forth all over again when new agencies invade the localities and build in them.

Under the USHA plan, most defense housing could have been built with repayable loans, since subsidies are unnecessary to house high-paid skilled workers. Under the new program, however, there is an outright grant of more than a quarter of a billion dollars, with at least another half-billion to come, and the government is authorized to take a complete loss if it must. After the emergency is over, the houses will probably be torn down or sold for what they will bring. Far from being more economical, the scheme is a scandalous waste of public funds.

The houses under the USHA program were to be permanent; they cost little more than temporary dwellings. They were to contain better living accommodations. Above all, they were to be so built that they could be converted after the emergency into low-rent projects for slum families. They would thus represent community assets of lasting value. Short-sighted real-estate interests are pressing for temporary shelter that will not compete with their investments, but it would be a tragedy if their plans were adopted. Temporary buildings, like the shack towns built after the Galveston flood and the San Francisco earthquake, have a tendency to become permanent, quickly degenerating into areas of vice and contagion. In the face of a housing famine, it is doubtful that they would ever be torn down; it might not be wise to do so if people in the community could find no other quarters. Thus instead of employing its vast resources to rehouse its underprivileged citizens and fulfil a great peace-time need, the government would be using them to blast the social program out of existence.

The truth is that there never has been a really strong housing movement, and this more than anything else is responsible for the present situation. Born as part of a depression program, housing was bound to meet stubborn resistance when the depression was over. Social workers lost interest in it once it was under way. Labor gave it only mild and occasional lip service. Members

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of the local agencies, unpaid officials in the public service, most of them strange and inexpert in the political byways, trembled every time their open support of legislation was branded as lobbying. The slum dweller himself was never vocal. The few people who did fight for housing were dismissed as star-gazers. Senator Wagner and Congressman McCormack have had to support the program almost single-handed. And against this unorganized and inarticulate group there has always stood a well-formed and well-financed array of vested rights trained in political tactics. When the business index pointed upward and the time was ripe to overthrow the program, they had little difficulty in doing so.

Officials cannot be expected to fight for the program alone. There will have to be a public outcry if public housing is to be saved.

They Don't Know London!

BY ERIKA MANN

London, September 23

MY FLAT has been blown up, my typewriter smashed, and most of my manuscripts and notes burned; nevertheless, I will try to give a simple account of last night, when all this happened. By now most of my friends have had the same kind of experience, to say nothing of the people of London East, whose adventures have been more serious.

I was not there when parts of the ceiling came down and a fire started blazing in my room. Down in our cellar nothing particular happened. The windows, of course, were blown in and our whole little blackout setup crashed into the kitchen—boards, shutters, glass, and sand. Nobody was hurt. Our landlord, an elderly Englishman of great dignity, was the only one to get a bit excited, wondering whether his canary next door had survived. After a few minutes of mild confusion and uncertainty, the firemen arrived and saved the house from complete destruction. We could not, however, stay. There was still danger that the building would collapse; besides, little pieces of shrapnel kept coming in, as if with the wind, through the black holes that had been our windows.

We could not see a thing in the smoky darkness. I walked out into the street. The familiar spectacle of a sky torn by exploding shells was before me. The east was bathed in red flames as by the rising sun; I heard the sinister concert we are already so accustomed to—the hollow boom of the anti-aircraft guns, rather consoling in its reproachful persistence, the hiss of falling bombs, followed, within a few seconds, by the shock and thunder of the explosion. Hardly a taxi can be found during night raids, so I decided to walk to a hotel twelve blocks away. More annoying than anything else is the humming of bombers over one's head—the impertinence of deadly bluebottles against which one is powerless. Once a bomb is released, one can do something about it: one can judge from its sound where it will explode and senselessly jump to the other side of the street, or throw oneself down, or do whatever some strange instinct commands. But the roar of the murderous engines in the sky is threatening in a disquietingly vague manner. Besides, it is infuriating. Up above the clouds hide Field Marshal Göring's obedient heroes. Their risk, during these night raids, is almost nothing. True, they cannot aim properly since our gun barrage keeps them at a considerable height. But do they even wish to aim? Their goal is general destruction; London is big and something is bound to be destroyed whenever a bomb is dropped at random. The German High Command, by the way, for once basing its communiqué on a British statement, recently announced: "Most of our bombs have been dropped on the highly important industrial suburb of Random, which has been virtually eradicated."

I walked over to the battlefield, inadequately equipped. Tin helmets are helpful against pieces of shrapnel but at present cannot be bought. The first hotel at which I inquired had been bombed. I went on and realized that I had been walking on glass for the past twenty minutes. The tiny noise produced by glass broken under one's feet is disagreeably distinct and will not be silenced by more violent sounds. The second hotel proved to be crowded. Two Dutch sailors and a woman who seemed to be Polish had just been given the last available rooms but preferred to sit on the staircase, talking to each other in strange, hoarse French. Nothing had happened here except that the bar had been smashed; liquor of all colors was streaming over the floor. I was told I could stay in the cellar till the "all clear." Since this, for almost three weeks, had simply stood for dawn, I chose instead to return to the battle and look for a way out of this particularly lively section of the city.

On my way I talked to many people—home guards, wardens, firemen, policemen, soldiers, and homeless wanderers like myself. No one seemed to be nervous or frightened. "Frankly, I do not like it," was the strongest statement of disapproval I heard. It was a young officer who said it, and he added that at first he hadn't minded at all, but now that he had had hardly any sleep for the

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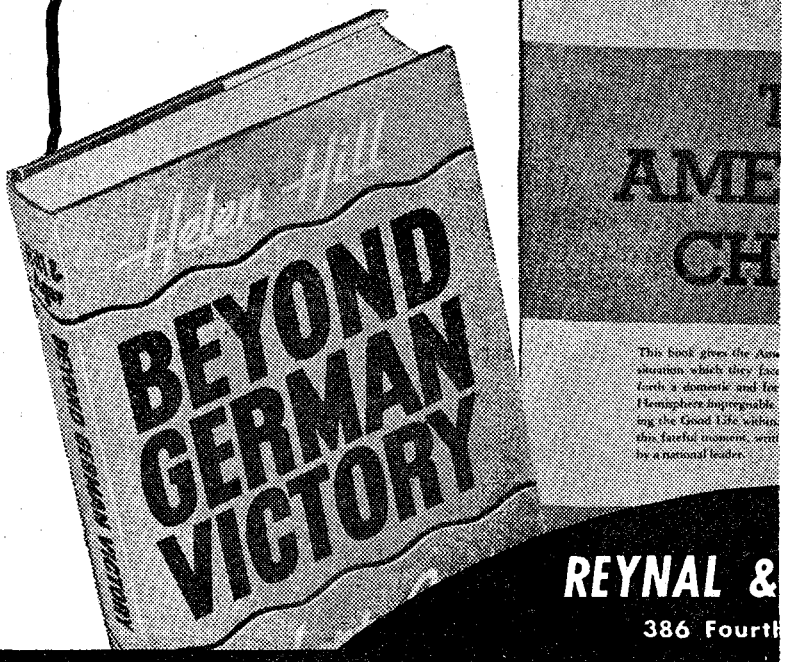

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THE BOTTLENECKS OF BUSINESS
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here can be no doubt that the Germans look on this phere as their eventual happy hunting grounds . . ."

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ur soil, our crops, our trees, and our grass can be made d the bodies and souls of our children's children. We can oth security and beauty in our countrysides. We have made , but it is only a start . . ."

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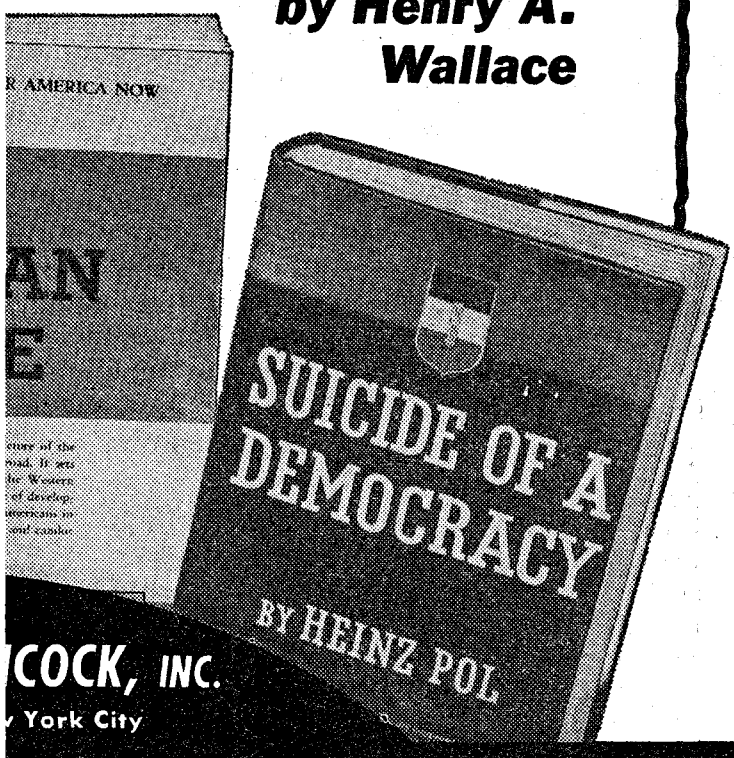
by Henry A. Wallace



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"...These confused Frenchmen who failed to understand the reasons for the events in Europe were the first to suffer complete psychic collapse in the spring of 1940. They gave up their cause as lost before it was actually lost . . . victims to a propaganda machine that had done its work so well and so quietly that they had not even become aware of its existence. They were the passive members of the Fifth Column . . ."

• • •

"...With Pétain, who was a mere pawn on Laval's chessboard, in the Cabinet, the capitulators had almost reached their goal. It is not the fact of surrender that constitutes the crime of these men, but their motives and purposes . . ."

• • •

"...The tragedy of our time consists in the fact that the democracies offered their enemies the opportunity to learn from mistakes and to turn against democracy the very things democracy itself should have done . . ."

• • •

"...Those who witnessed the birth and development of Nazism, and so the weakness and the end of democracy in Germany, have developed an especially keen eye for certain things. Today this vision makes it possible for us to analyze and explain many events from a fresher viewpoint and a greater experience than those who are so intimately tied to their country by emotional bonds..."

• • •

"In so far as there is any higher sense in history, France had to pay for its own sins . . . Long before the war democracy had become an empty phrase used to cloak incompetence, carelessness, lack of energy, ill-will, and treason."

• • •

"In the final reckoning, events in France proceeded no differently than they did in Germany: Fascism is the consequence of the failure of democracy."

• • •

"Even in 1937 the concept of democracy was merely a shingle hung out at the door of France; there were Frenchmen of tremendous influence who were willing to destroy their own country for the sake of personal interest or for the love of the overlords of Berlin and Rome."

SUICIDE OF A DEMOCRACY

by Heinz Pol

GERMAN ECONOMY 1870-1940
By Gustav Stolper

MEIN KAMPF
By Adolf Hitler

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past fortnight, he was becoming slightly annoyed. When I finally arrived at a big hotel in the center of the city, blood was flowing down my leg and there was too much glass in my shoes for comfort.

It was one o'clock in the morning. The jazz band was playing in the basement. Dancing couples, occasionally shaken against each other by nearby explosions, seemed in the best of spirits. They were pleased because the noise of the band swallowed up some of the war din. For a while I stood there at the entrance to the ballroom, wondering: did I admire this unconcerned gaiety, or did I think it a bit silly and cynical? I decided that it was at least impressive.

Hotel guests who wish neither to dance away the danger nor to spend the night in the cellar have their mattresses and blankets taken out in the corridors, for some superstitious reason or other. It was an amazing scene, more like an overcrowded field hospital than a chic hotel. Total warfare has strange manifestations: never before has a city been so constantly exposed to nerve-racking assaults of this kind. Even Rotterdam with its seven-minutes-long disaster and its 20,000 dead, even Warsaw, or the cities of Loyalist Spain, did not have to endure the appalling regularity with which London is being bombed for ten hours every night. A few hours of sleep can always be found around dawn, but the rest and awakening are those of an invalid who, after a feverish night full of pains and incredible nightmares, has been given some soothing drug to quiet him. He is exhausted, though happy, and even in his kinder dreams he knows that the peace will not last—that the struggle against death is not over.

It has hardly begun, the struggle. Everybody here realizes this, but nobody—I sincerely believe *nobody*—dreams of capitulation. The reactions of the people are of many kinds, and what is called "morale" varies. But neither hysteria, nor fear, nor the slightest sign of panic can be found anywhere. I watched a man whose house had been bombed while he was away. He stood there before the ruins shaking his head and repeating, in the tone of some highly civilized person who for the first time discovers that bestiality exists among human beings, "But this is disgusting, perfectly disgusting!"

Nor—strange as this may sound—is hatred, passionate hatred, of the enemy encountered. Rather there prevails a kind of pity mingled with astonished contempt. Stories are being told about captured German pilots who break down completely when they gradually realize that they have been misled by their leaders; that London is not by any means on the verge of collapse but is still a living city with buses running, people working, laughing, and dancing; with food distribution and all the services functioning, and the children playing in the streets. "What can you expect?" the people say to one another, "those poor fools *don't know London!*"

Within the Gates

"WHEREVER in the world there is an Italian, there is, alive and present, Fascist Italy with her faith, her organs, and adequate means for action," writes Felice Felicioni, a high-ranking member of the Italian hierarchy, in an American newspaper. Many Italians living in the United States and many more American citizens of Italian descent disagree with the Fascist concept of inescapable allegiance to Italy, but Italian propaganda is constantly attempting to win them over. This propaganda, the best organized in the United States, is heard on the air waves, is found in both Italian- and English-language newspapers, is the inspiration of "cultural" societies and of "shirted" militant groups. It reaches youth, as this column pointed out two weeks ago, by insinuating itself into public and parochial schools disguised as education. Frequently when persuasion fails, it resorts to more direct methods.

The concentration of Italian immigrants in relatively self-contained communities in or near large cities simplifies the work of the Fascist propagandists. No fewer than 2,000,000 persons who fall within Mussolini's definition of Italian live within fifty miles of New York's Times Square, and can therefore easily be subjected to pressure by the propaganda machine headed by Consul General Gaetano Vecchiotti. Radio is perhaps the most effective instrument for propaganda among adults; certainly it is the cheapest. It is effective because it takes the form of objective Italian-language news broadcasts, and it is cheap because it is paid for by business firms which depend largely upon an Italian-American market. The radio stations which sell the time and the business men who buy it may be guiltless of ulterior motive, but the broadcasts are, in fact if not in intent, propaganda of the most flagrant sort. During the summer of 1940 two affiliated New York stations, WOV and WBIL, permitted four well-known Fascists to peddle propaganda in the guise of news. Giovanni Favoino di Giura, sponsored by the Parodi Cigar Company, was at one time secretary of the New York branch of Italian Fascists Abroad. Gaetano Ferri is listed in the Italian "Who's Who" as "a Fascist of the first rank." A third news broadcaster, Leandro Forni, boasts that he started the Fascist movement in Vincenza, Italy. The Italian "Who's Who" describes the fourth, Frank Polimeni, as "radio ambassador of Italianism in America."

The owners of WOV and WBIL, who incidentally are not Italian, disclaim all responsibility for the propaganda content of these broadcasts, and point to the fact that they have censored the material. But their choice of "censors" has hardly been impartial. The first man employed resigned under pressure from Italian anti-Fascists. His successor was recommended to the stations by the Italian embassy; the third was hired on the recommendation of Professor Peter N. Riccio, whose doctorate thesis at Columbia, "On the Threshold of Fascism," has been translated and widely distributed in Italy. Stations WOV and WBIL are not the only offenders. Propaganda masquerading as objective newscasts is heard daily in Philadelphia, Boston, New Haven, Pittsburgh, and a dozen other cities.

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Few Italian communities are too small to support an Italian-language newspaper favorable to Fascism. In New York perhaps the most influential is *Il Grido della Stirpe—the Cry of the Race*—whose masthead admits quite frankly that it is a "Journal of Fascist Propaganda." Its publisher, Domenico Trombetta, is a man of sufficient importance to have been granted a long interview with Count Ciano in the summer of 1939. An Italian newspaper reported at the time that "His Excellency Count Galeazzo Ciano has received with warmth one of the sincerest and purest Fascist residents in America, Domenico Trombetta." So extensive is his newspaper's circulation among Italian-Americans in New York, and so important is Trombetta in the community, that business men who import Italian products or sell largely to Italian-Americans find it expedient to buy advertising space. Recently non-advertisers received marked copies of an issue which carried this announcement: "We shall publish in due time a list of all business houses which refuse and will still refuse in the future to help *Il Grido della Stirpe*. We shall bring them to the attention of our friends, who will know how to conduct themselves in making purchases." A subsequent issue was even more threatening. In a front-page story attacking those who had refused to be blackmailed, Trombetta wrote ominously that "Fascism will recognize in them its true enemies."

Ranking close to Trombetta in the field of printed propaganda is Generoso Pope, publisher of two New York Italian-language dailies, *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* and *Il Corriere d'America*. The editorial policy of these papers is somewhat more restrained than that of *Il Grido della Stirpe*, but Mr. Pope's devotion to Italy is as great as Mr. Trombetta's. It is revealed in numerous statements of his quoted in his own newspapers. In one speech as reported by them he said: "First I wish you to shout with me, 'Down with the enemies of our country!' . . . When Italy can boast sons like you, then victory is here. Long live Italy, long live the King, long live Mussolini!" During the Ethiopian war Mr. Pope gave his readers thousands of fountain pens ornamented with the Fascist emblem. During his last visit in Rome he rated an audience with both the Duce and the King. Messrs. Pope and Trombetta are but two of the dozens of publishers who feed Italian-Americans their daily ration of Fascist propaganda.

The anti-Fascist Italian magazine, *Il Mondo*, recently listed forty-six Italian-American organizations in Greater New York whose direction stems from the Italian government. These groups, almost without exception, are under the supervision of a "cultural attaché" of the Italian consulate. Their leaders are invariably convinced Fascists. There is not space here to discuss their various activities, but the following telegram to the Italian press from the Morgantini Club indicates their loyalties: "Italians of Harlem, organizing today the Mario Morgantini Club, swear allegiance to Il Duce."

The graduate school of all Italian-American organizations is known as the Blackshirts, a group of 10,000 men who have taken this oath: "In the name of God and of Italy I swear that I will follow the orders of Il Duce and will serve with all my strength, if necessary with my blood, the cause of the Fascist Revolution."

In the Wind

DEMOCRATIC LEADERS are definitely worried about New York State, and Tom Corcoran is on the scene to do something about it. The chief source of concern is the hostility of C. I. O. unions, some following Lewis, some under Communist guidance. Incidentally, New Dealers think the trade talks with Russia will wipe out opposition from the Communists.

AT WILLKIE HEADQUARTERS, where Russell Davenport, ex-managing editor of *Fortune*, is key man, cynics have coined this phrase: "Willkie has made his Davenport—now he'll have to lie in it."

A CONSERVATIVE Pittsburgh lawyer recently agreed to act as attorney for Communists in a free-speech case. When he entered the courtroom an acquaintance murmured to him: "I didn't know you had become a Communist." The attorney flared back: "I've defended murderers in the courtroom for twenty years, and you never called me a murderer."

UNDER THE CAPTION "Americanism, El Paso County Style," the Colorado Springs *Advertiser* ran an item about the activities of a newly formed Americanism Council. The item said the council had set up a committee "to which citizens may report persons suspected of un-American activities. . . . It is hoped that such a service will . . . discourage vigilante groups."

IN THE FUROR raised by Nicholas Murray Butler's warning to members of the Columbia faculty who don't share his anti-Nazi views, this fact has been overlooked: the last student expelled from the university was fired for leading a demonstration outside Dr. Butler's home. The demonstration was in protest against Dr. Butler's appointment of a Columbia delegate to academic ceremonies at Heidelberg University. That was in 1936.

REPUBLICANS ARE talking hopefully of a swift "publicity blitzkrieg" in the ten days before election. It is said that plans have been made for a whirlwind drive, at big cost and under expert guidance, in a last-minute effort to salvage the election.

THIS NOTICE was displayed in a London block of flats: "Visitors wishing to be called during an air raid should leave their names with the hall porter."

AFTER THE New Deal apparently reversed its position on the issuance of defense contracts to firms violating the labor laws, a first lieutenant of John L. Lewis said privately that the chances against his indorsement of F. D. R. had risen to fifty to one.

[*We invite our readers to submit material for In the Wind —either clippings with source and date or stories that can be clearly authenticated. A prize of $5 will be awarded each month for the best item.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

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A Native at Large

BY JONATHAN DANIELS

"THE last spasm was about safety," the State Superintendent of Public Instruction said. He did not say it critically. He had approved teaching the children safety on the roads. Now he was planning with other public-education officials in other states to teach the children democracy in the schools. Everybody was for it.

"We've got to teach our children democracy here, just like the fascists have taught them to believe in fascism in their schools. We've got to make the children know that democracy is worth dying for, too."

I am as much in favor of that as the textbook manufacturers who already are offering new texts on democracy to the suddenly, as it appears, democracy-conscious schools. In fact, I was asked to write one of the texts myself and almost agreed. It would have been fun and maybe patriotic, too. But I think we should be concerned about our public schools if the time has come when democracy must be taught in them as if it were something like the boundaries of Ethiopia, to be learned quickly out of a book.

Democracy has been taking a beating in our [illegible] schools for a long time, and the teachers and the bo[illegible] are not altogether to blame. Everywhere but in the sma[illegible]est towns the old days when the doctor's boy sat next to the laborer's son long ago came to an end. The automobile has speeded our segregation of ourselves in classes based on the location of real estate. Some school officials have helped the process of segregation by a little gerrymandering of school-district lines.

And sometimes I think the social scientists have done as much harm as the snobs. We live in a modern world which has been very sure of itself, at least in the graduate schools of education. They got to know, so they said, more about the mind of the child than anybody had known before. As a result they made a profound change in the teaching. Down in the lower grades they took out the old heroes and their stories and put into the readers "more material from the environment of the child." It sounds excellent, but it meant that the early training of the child as a part of a nation and a civilization extending beyond his scooter was discarded. He was no longer one who shared the mythology of little George beside the cherry tree or the little boy who saved Holland with a finger in a hole. I think he lost something important when he lost contact with them and swapped them for a story about a Scottie puppy.

And the process did not stop there. More and more in our schools, as far as I can discover, the child's contact with history has been decreased to allow more study of the so-called social sciences, which put the intellectual digestive processes of a Ph.D. between the facts and the child. The scheme was designed to teach the child more with less pain, but it substituted the abstract for the concrete. There may have been pure gain in discarding the old business of memorizing dates for the new process of memorizing the 1, 2, 3, conclusions of the Ph.D.—I am not sure. The older I get the more I wish I knew more dates and the less certain I am of the social scientists' deductions. Finally, the process brought the child from American history to what they call civics. I don't know any delicate way in which to describe civics, but the general idea of it seems to be to convince the children that the Constitution was written by Y. M. C. A. secretaries and that the country has been exclusively conducted by the Boy Scouts. I do not in the least object to the puri[illegible]ation of our history for young children, but I do [illegible]espise draining the human blood from the processes [illegible]f our democracy.

For that reason I'm fearful of the present spasm, as the educator called it, about teaching democracy in the schools in this crisis. My hunch is that there is going to be another book—a whole batch of other books—saying that democracy is nice. I certainly am not arguing about that. But to grow patriots we must have something more than a spasm. We have been, I think, afraid of patriotism. Sometimes even the D. A. R.'s and the American Legion have prejudiced us against it. Americanism has sometimes become—or seemed to become—a word in the almost exclusive possession of scoundrels or fools. We have had a crop of intellectuals who played Jack Horner every time they discovered a departure from the documents in our patriotic mythology.

We are apparently agreed, however, that in the schools and outside them, too, it is time for more enthusiastic patriotism about this land and its meaning in our hearts. Stirring such a patriotism is going to be a much more difficult process than getting some new textbooks. In some places, if it is to succeed, it is going to mean that the schools themselves will have to be democratic. And everywhere, I think, if it is to succeed, it must begin at the bottom. George Washington must have at least an even break with scooters and Scottie dogs—in the first grade and from that point on.

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

The Maginot Spirit

TRAGEDY IN FRANCE: AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT. By André Maurois. Translated by Denver Lindley. Harper and Brothers. $2.

I SAW FRANCE FALL: WILL SHE RISE AGAIN? By René de Chambrun. William Morrow and Company. $2.50.

SUICIDE OF A DEMOCRACY. By Heinz Pol. Translated by Heinz and Ruth Norden. Reynal and Hitchcock. $2.50.

A VAST army of witnesses will soon be upon us; this is the vanguard. In each of these books there are two elements—a direct testimony and an attempt to understand and to judge. As a narrative of personal experience, Chambrun's is by far the best. He lived in a fort of the Maginot Line; he was liaison officer at British G. H. Q.; he found himself in the worst of the débâcle in Belgium; he escaped from Dunkerque; he flew back to Paris in a tiny "Grasshopper"; and he was sent on a desperate mission to President Roosevelt. His style is direct, vivid, faultlessly American. In these darkest hours he has not lost his juvenile zest for life or his sense of humor. Some of his pages have the charm of the earlier Maurois, in "The Silences of Colonel Bramble." The narrative parts form at least three-fourths of the book; they are unimpeachable as well as fascinating.

Maurois likewise was a liaison officer with the B. E. F.; he too saw the tragic flight of the Belgians; he too was intrusted with a desperate and futile mission. His evidence, in the main, agrees with Chambrun's.

Heinz Pol's first-hand testimony is more limited, but in its field it is of commanding value. He, a refugee from Nazi terrorism, was interned as an enemy alien. He saw how Daladier's France, still nominally a democracy, treated the victims of Hitler, who should have been its closest allies. Long before the military disaster the French Republic had already committed suicide. When we have to face a similar problem, it would be well to heed Pol's warning.

The interpretative parts of the three books are of very unequal value. Chambrun is committed to the Pétain government. He is a remote descendant of Lafayette; but he is also the son-in-law of Pierre Laval, that sturdy son of the soil who by the sweat of his honest brow rose from a petty Socialist politician to a multimillionaire. His bias is unmistakable, but it is artfully camouflaged. A fair sample of his method is his reference to the Salengro case. It is so worded that, in a literal sense, it is true: Salengro *was* accused of desertion. What Chambrun fails to add is that the charge was proved baseless by a military commission. Salengro was hounded to death with a palpable calumny, by men who were not merely unscrupulous but in true Nazi fashion sadistic as well. Such *suppressio veri et suggestio falsi* is more in harmony with the cleverness of Laval than with the naive chivalry of Lafayette.

Heinz Pol is of the left. He gives an excellent account of the many forces which, more or less openly, were attacking the republic, frequently with assistance from abroad—Cagoulards, Croix de Feu, Camelots du Roi, Tardieu, Doriot, Déat, Bergery. The arch-villain, in his eyes, is Bonnet; his heroes are Reynaud, de Gaulle, and Mandel. The book is well informed in spite of minor flaws, and fair within the plain limits of partisanship.

As an interpretation Maurois's book stands alone. Not because of Maurois's international fame; but because circumstances have compelled him to think more earnestly and with more delicate shades than either Chambrun or Pol. A capitalist, an Academician, an admirer of Lyautey, he belongs like Chambrun to the world of which Pétain is the figurehead. But not quite. His ancestry, like Léon Blum's, is not "Old France." He understands, admires, and loves England. The Battle of Oran caused a horrible wrench in his complex loyalties. There is far more "meditation" in his book than in the other two combined. He does not merely narrate, and he does not blindly arraign; he seeks to understand. And his conclusions are convincing—with one last trace of conservative bias.

Are there any definite lines that come out of this blurred composite picture? Yes. On five of the following points there is among the three writers a fair degree of agreement. On the sixth their testimonies are complementary rather than conflicting.

1. The profound pacifism of the whole people. They adopted any policy, they followed any leader, that promised to keep them out of war. The Communists were a rising influence in 1936; they lost ground because, in the Spanish and in the Czechoslovak crises, they advocated resistance and were branded as warmongers.

2. Of this pacifism the Maginot Line was the symbol. Everything was sacrificed for passive defense. Technically the Maginot Line may have been justifiable; it was flanked, not breached. But the Maginot spirit meant the abandonment of collective security. France imitated the Anglo-Saxon powers. It wanted to feel as safe, as impregnable, behind its formidable ramparts, as England behind the Channel or America behind the Atlantic. It was fooled, and England was fooled. Sink as many billions as you please, there is no safety for any nation unless there be safety for all.

3. The conservatism of the French army, hardened in the glorious memories of 1918. Gamelin tried to be another Pétain—cautious, sparing of blood, turning the whole front into a gigantic Verdun. The army refused to admit the possibility of the *Blitzkrieg*.

4. The pitifully inadequate part played by the British army. According to Chambrun, it held 1 per cent of the front. Even during the last battle most of the R. A. F. was kept at home to protect English cities. Hence the bitter jests current in the French ranks: "Have you seen *the* Englishman?"—"England will fight to the last Frenchman." (How many of us are sternly resolved to defend democracy to the very last Englishman?)

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5. However incomplete the French and British armaments may have been in September, 1939, the Allies had eight months to create new *matériel* and evolve new methods. They wasted that providential respite, just as they ignored the lessons of the Polish campaign. According to Maurois, military bureaucrats remained bureaucrats; industrialists wanted to keep profitable orders at home; and the General Staff "prepared for a war which never was to take place."

6. Finally, there was no "sacred union." Daladier treated his whilom associates, the Communists, as national enemies. For Maurras and Weygand, democratic France represented everything evil, and should be destroyed. Mussolini and Franco were Pétain's models. Hitler was Flandin's Führer. Bonnet and Laval now boast openly that they were against the war. Thus there was defeatism at both ends during the eight demoralizing months of "phony war" and bewilderment at the center: what are we fighting for? Maurois—and naturally Chambrun—fails to record that Blum had offered a "sacred union" three years before. Thorez was then ready to accept full cooperation with bourgeois democrats, just as Litvinov was eager to do so in the international field. This offer was rejected by the right. It was this great refusal that destroyed the unity of France.

The lack of "sacred union" explains, not the military débâcle, but the abject surrender that followed. Even if the whole of continental France was lost, need Pétain have sacrificed every vestige of French honor and power? France still had the remnants of an air force, a fine navy, two intact armies in North Africa and in Syria, an empire, an ally, world sympathies. All these were thrown away in order to win the one victory that Pétain, Weygand, Maurras, Flandin had craved for years: a victory over the socialist masses. Only Heinz Pol raises this all-important point; neither Chambrun nor Maurois dares allude to it. The guilt of the reactionary camarilla is too flagrant.

ALBERT GUÉRARD

American Fable

TRANSIT U. S. A. By W. L. River. Frederick A. Stokes Company. $2.50.

IT IS a far cry from Mr. River's last novel "The Torguts," a story of the great eighteenth-century Tartar migration, to "Transit U. S. A.," which is a whimsical and delightfully salty allegory of our own time, a fable that has all the outward appearances of realistic fiction. A dim-witted but very good-natured and lovable young American Don Quixote named Curly Martin, owner and operator of the Original Glass-bottomed Boat for tourists on Buenavista Island, sets out in the company of an eccentric hobo to seek Mr. Borland, the oil magnate who in a sentimental moment had bought the island hoping to keep it always picturesque and unspoiled, and had told Curly to come and see him if anything ever went wrong. Starting from the Pacific Coast with only $12 in his pocket, Curly makes his way across the continent, charging headlong against the windmills of big business and mercenary greed and intrenched snobbery, and such is his pure faith in human good-will that he never even realizes that he has again and again been tossed around and slammed down to earth by the relentlessly whirling vanes. In the course of his trek he smells the inside of several jails and leaves some of his blood and skin on the knuckles of a number of brakemen and hired thugs, and he also meets with one sample each of a good many American types, including queer ducks, reformers, scoundrels, good neighbors, nomads, dumb oxen, even a strange and stormy paintress who lives in the Arizona desert.

Curly is the embodiment of the child-mind of many a bewildered American who feels lost in the spook-filled forest of the present world, but whose wholesome faith in life cannot—to judge by the book—be beaten down by hunger or poverty or the cruelty of man to man. While this thought may furnish very scant comfort to the real Curly Martins when their mortgages are foreclosed, one may hope at least that the wholesome honesty and optimism of the everyday little man will bear him through his trials as safely as they support Mr. River's hero on his pilgrimage.

"Transit U. S. A." is a highly original tale. Imagine "The Pilgrim's Progress" as it might have been written in collaboration by Cervantes and Rabelais in terms of modern America, and you will see why it makes fascinating reading from beginning to end.

LOUIS B. SALOMON

Epic of the Spanish War

THE GREAT CRUSADE. By Gustav Regler. Longmans, Green, and Company. $2.50.

THIS is a cynical world; yet there are still men among us who suffer and die, freely and gladly, for their ideals. It is of such men that Gustav Regler speaks to us in sharp moving accents in "The Great Crusade." Ernest Hemingway, who had close contact with that crusade through many tense and often heart-rending months, has written the preface. The volume is dedicated to Jay Allen, whose devotion never wavered, even in black hours.

Crusaders once fought under the cross—whence the name. These crusaders of Spain, condemned in the name of the cross, could not well hold it aloft. They received no churchly blessings—only anathema and slander. Yet they were fighting Christianity's greatest battle against forces leagued together, as never before in history, to destroy Christianity.

These crusaders—we should devise a word for such men other than this discredited one—came out of France and Italy and Poland and Czechoslovakia, out of England and America, even out of Abyssinia and Germany. They went to fight and die in Spain for what seemed to them the last hope of freedom in Europe—perhaps in the world for a long time to come. If they also fought for Spain, that was a secondary fact. They were fighting primarily for France, for a free Italy and Germany, for Poland, England, America. Not all had the same opinions. Some were old-fashioned republicans and democrats; some were even good Catholics who believed in freedom; others were more "advanced" in their ideas. But all met on the common ground of their devotion to freedom. Blindly the countries whose battle they were fighting did not see where their own interests lay, and held these men in disdain. So the first great battle for freedom was lost in Spain, with the result that today freedom

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has been driven into a corner, where it is making its last desperate stand.

After the battle was lost and the curtain rung down, the "democratic France" that was—if in fact it was—placed the crusaders of Spain in shelterless concentration camps on windswept sands, there to live if they could. Yet a few months later many of them fought again valiantly for France in its hour of danger. The "better classes" of England ostracized these men. In the spring of 1939, before the echoes of the Battle of Spain had yet died away, when the rumblings that foretold the Battles of France and Britain were growing louder, the King and Queen of England went to Paris. Some British soldiers wounded in Spain, who lay in the British hospital, were ordered removed before the royal visit to the hospital took place. Today England is using the men who fought in Spain, drawing on the experience and technical skill acquired there; and they are fighting to safeguard the position and possessions of that tribe of appeasers who so blithely betrayed peoples "of whom we know little" and heaped ignominy on the British volunteers in Spain. And even upper-class England is learning—if it ever learns anything—what ordinary Englishmen always knew, that the men who went to Spain went out of loyalty to England. In our own country the men of the Lincoln Brigade have been harassed by the police and clapped into prisons. But America will discover that these men, in fighting the enemies of Spanish freedom, fought also for America.

These are the men we meet in Gustav Regler's book—the volunteers of the International Brigade whom he knew so intimately for almost three years. He takes us to the front, into the trenches, across battlefields under fire, into headquarters, hospitals, and behind the lines. He lets us live with these men, following the threads of their lives until those lives are snuffed out—in the first days or months, in the first year, the second, or third. As one or another drops from the scene the reader feels that he too has lost a comrade. Even those who seem to lead charmed lives, Paul the general and Werner the doctor—a great psychologist cast out of Germany because of his race—are at last found by fatal shells.

Albert, the *comisario,* father confessor, diplomat, judge, allayer of suspicions and passions, military tactician and strategist, the man who steps in to command when cowardice or treachery or death removes a superior officer, is among those who survive. Albert, we are told by Hemingway, is Gustav Regler, who was Hitler's Public Enemy Number 19 when he fled from Germany before the Great Crusade.

Moving among the men of the International Brigade whom Regler presents to us, we see all the facets of their characters: their loves and hates, their devotion to comrades and to principles. Sometimes there are betrayals of comrades and principles, sometimes unwarranted suspicion. The spy fever is at work here too, and with reason. There are times when an almost fanatical "party viewpoint" emerges; there are those, who having betrayed comrades to secret police in Germany or Poland, have come stricken with remorse to wipe out their offense under fire. But betrayal is the unpardonable sin for which there is no atonement.

The battle that saved Madrid in November, 1936, Guadalajara, Torija, Brihuega, Huesca—one walks through the

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LAWRENCE FERNSWORTH

Marx Reconsidered

REASON, SOCIAL MYTHS, AND DEMOCRACY. By Sidney Hook. John Day Company. $3.

NO ONE in America has expounded Marxist philosophy with greater authority and persuasiveness than Sidney Hook. For this reason a book by him in which practically all Marxist doctrines are subjected to some criticism and many completely rejected is something of an event. Taken in the context of the general mood of Marxist revisionism, it is not only an intellectual event but part of a political movement of real significance. Hook has of course always been a critical devotee of Marxist thought, and therefore cannot be accused of reversing himself. Nevertheless, he here extends previous criticisms so far beyond their earlier proportions that the progress of his thought may be described as moving from heresy to apostasy.

It is difficult to survey in brief space the havoc wrought upon Marxist doctrine by his critical onslaughts, but something of its dimensions may be indicated. The Marxist theory of class is termed "so vague that no matter what the evidence, it could be claimed as a vindication of the thesis." The Marxist faith in the working class as the fateful instrument of mankind's emancipation is found defective. The class has a fateful and significant position in modern society, but whether it can fulfil its destiny is another question: "Unfortunately, being in a position and being able to move from that position are two different things." The Marxist theory of the state as merely an instrument of class domination which will wither away with the abolition of classes is found too simple. Marxist economic determinism overemphasizes the economic factor in social life. The idea of an inevitable revolution is almost wholly rejected. A revolution "is something to be accomplished when economic conditions are ripe. But how? By men and not by economic forces." Marxist historical laws, which seek to reduce historical tendencies to "laws of motion," are found to lead to "an unscientific disregard of the specific factors in each historical situation."

The utopian overtones in all Marxist doctrine are subjected to an astute criticism which results in their virtual rejection. The idea of a classless society, if taken literally, is termed a "will-o'-the-wisp." The idea of equality is correctly valued as a transcendent principle of justice, as a "guiding principle to reduce differences in living conditions," but as incapable of full realization in history. The hope that a socialized economy will not only destroy class domination but eliminate "the struggle for individual existence" is termed "eschatological utopianism"; for "more important than the struggle for individual existence is the struggle for better individual existence." Human desires are infinitely extensible and include ends which transcend physical needs, though even these have no fixed limits.

Some of the most discriminating and profound reasoning in Hook's book is devoted to a critical analysis of the dialecti-

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cal principle in Marxist thought, which is found to have many meanings, some of which are not clear while others reduce themselves to absurdity. Efforts of such scientists as Haldane, Levy, Needham, and Prenant to construct a Marxist mathematics and biology are found to be no more respectable than similar efforts to establish a Nazi science.

Since the book is primarily devoted to criticism, the constructive elements in its analysis are more frequently implicit than explicit, and, where explicit, they are devoted to specific doctrines rather than to the Marxist structure as a whole. It is therefore difficult to do justice to Hook if one seeks to discover how much of the original structure of Marxist thought is left standing in his system. He is convinced, I think rightly, that "stripped of the metaphysics of its value theory, the Marxist critique of capitalist economy still retains its validity." While he regards Stalinism as not so much a corruption of Leninism as its inevitable consequence he does not believe that Leninism flows inevitably from Marxism. Stalin's dictatorship over the party is an inevitable corruption of Lenin's doctrine of the dictatorship of the party, but the latter is not an inevitable fruit of Marx's doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The corrosion of Marxist elements in Hook's thought increases the proportion of what may not unfairly be defined as the liberal element in his total system. After rejecting the Marxist doctrine of "ideology" as interpreting the interest which corrupts knowledge and truth in too narrowly economic terms, Hook seems to return to the liberal doctrine of scientific objectivity, appealing for the application of the spirit and the method of science "not merely to problems of physical control but to questions of human value." This idea breathes Professor Dewey's confidence in the possibility of achieving a position of transcendence over warring social creeds by a "free cooperative inquiry." Obviously it must be possible to achieve a degree of universally valid truth in social knowledge. If not, social life could not rise above the level to which Thomas Hobbes reduced it. But there is also an irreducible element of "ideological taint" in all social judgments, and this prevents us from achieving as much objectivity in judging issues in which our interests are involved as we have achieved in charting the stars. This whole problem is a very profound one and neither Marxist nor liberal theory has a fully adequate answer for it.

There are other sometimes rather surprising bits of "liberalism" in Hook's thought. He comes to the astonishing conclusion, for instance, that "the failure of socialist ideals to develop . . . is in the main due to *the failure of men*. The débâcle of Marxism represents a colossal moral failure, a failure of intelligence and courage." One could hardly accuse Lenin of lacking either intelligence or courage unless one meant that he was not intelligent enough to detect the errors in the basic presuppositions of the faith by which he was bound or not courageous enough to admit known errors in his system. But in that sense one might with equal validity say that the only difficulty with capitalism is that its proponents are too stupid to understand that it approaches the complexities of economic life with false presuppositions or too cowardly to admit their false premises. The judgment is, in other words, true but irrelevant.

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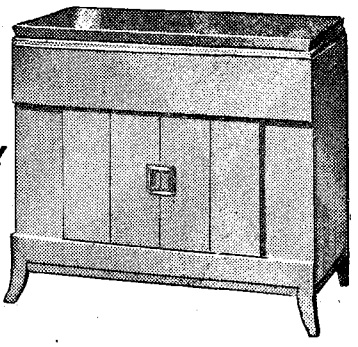

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Race and Racism

RACE: SCIENCE AND POLITICS. By Ruth Benedict. Modern Age Books. $2.50.

RUTH BENEDICT, the well-known social anthropologist, contributes to the subject of race a compact and vigorously written little volume which should be of great help in clearing the public mind of cant. She manages in 250 short pages to explain the prevailing attitude of modern scientists on the questions involved in race, and to assert the futility of hooking up these tangled abstractions to the facts of culture and social life which are the world's primary concern. Mrs. Benedict commands a thoroughly disciplined style which enables her to expound technical matters without heaviness or condescension; and with it goes an instinct for hitting on happy illustrations in many realms, all contributing their fragment of truth to the conclusion that race is a real subject for scientists and racism a myth for politicians.

On the latter half of this statement it is not hard to agree, nor to echo whole-heartedly Professor Boas's dictum that Mrs. Benedict's book is badly needed in our time. And perhaps that is all that need be said if one takes an immediately practical point of view. But the theoretical interest in the concept of race remains, and it is there that I disagree with the author—or rather that she explicitly disagrees with me by denying that race is a superstition. She explains in the first half of her book that only a very loose division of mankind into three large color groups, or else a particular study of physical traits found in individuals or families, is possible in the light of science. She adds, later, that race is in these senses an abstraction. So far we are on common ground. Abstractions we must have: the only question is how they work. When they purport to define certain things in a fixed relation, while in fact they cover a variable set of phenomena, they deserve, in my humble opinion, to be called superstitions.

If we take witchcraft as a fitting example, we must remember that there were many genuine facts to support the belief in it, and a sensible man like Barrett Wendell, writing in 1890 after a study of the documents, was able to show that some at least of the Salem witches were possessed (read: hysterical) and a decidedly evil influence in the community. The trouble with the concept "witchcraft" was its pretense to stand for a coherent and virtually invariant set of facts. It abstracted from irrelevant things, such as old age, or deformity, or an interest in reading books. Similarly, I think, with race. The scientists' right, defended by Mrs. Benedict, to study hereditary physical traits is the last thing I should think of denying. But the word "race" itself, implying a bundle of tangible, connected, and transmissible features on which membership in a fixed class can be based, is at worst a dangerous and at best an unserviceable word which has betrayed every writer, including Mrs. Benedict and myself, into suggesting what it cannot mean. It is too late to redefine it, precisely because it has generated the "racism" which modern scientists object to, and it is unfortunately too early for genetics to replace it with a concept XYZ which will truly say what science means to affirm.

JACQUES BARZUN

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IN BRIEF

JOURNEY THROUGH TIME. By Larry Barretto. Farrar and Rinehart. $2.50.

In this very finished novel Mr. Barretto, though he never quite grasps the nettle, has adumbrated the central psychological, and consequently practical, problem of the young who have grown up since what only yesterday was "the war." He sees it through the eyes of Bruce and Jane Randolph, who on the very eve of this war take their nineteen-year-old son to the France they have not been able to visit since that other one. Bruce and Jane, ruined in the crash of 1929, have been concentrating on holding their own and getting back where they were in the good old days, for their son Allan's sake, they tell themselves. But Allan does not want what they want for him. This is a mature novel by a man who has not lost the intuitive insight of youth.

HOLD BACK THE DAWN. By Ketti Frings. Duell, Sloane and Pearce. $2.50.

This is a novel of unusual distinction. A group of refugees waiting in Mexico for permission to enter the promised land are drawn both sharply and sympathetically. The reader can see them as they would be in happier circumstances, and in the round. A tale of hope deferred, it has a particularly warm-hearted love story for its central plot. The author writes with simplicity and directness, and only an occasional wisecrack betrays immaturity.

WEEVIL IN THE COTTON. By Samuel Milton Elam. Frederick A. Stokes. $2.

Dictatorship, concentration camps, and storm troops are translated into terms of a corrupt political ring in a Southern city. The story, told in the first person by a newspaperman, a member of the ring, has a plot that is all too familiar and far from convincing in its present dress. The pulp-magazine style, too, makes dull reading, though it is doubtless in character.

DEEP GROW THE ROOTS. By Mari Tomasi. J. B. Lippincott Company. $2.

A warm-hearted, unpretentious novel of life in a small Italian hill town at the time when Mussolini's empire dream made Ethiopia more than a barbarous foreign name to peasant folk whose horizons had been bounded by their chestnut groves and the village priest. Miss Tomasi depicts a quaint locale with deft, economical strokes, underlining the attachment of the hillman to his land and his fierce determination not to be made a target for spears in an Abyssinian desert.

RUDYARD KIPLING. By Edward Shanks. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

A smoothly written, pious, but superficial biography of Kipling. Subtitled "a study in literary and political ideas," it reveals no very deep spade work by Mr. Shanks in either field. It does serve to remind us, however, that Kipling was a better writer than is now commonly recognized, and an important representative of ideas which have a new and terrifying formulation in Hitlerism.

AND SO TO BATH. By Cecil Roberts. The Macmillan Company. $3.

A well-known English novelist, author of "Victoria Four-Thirty," makes a chatty three-months-long journey along the historic road from London to Bath, finding the past in the present. He is a trifle repetitious, frankly interested in the more frivolous aspects of the scene, and sometimes slightly inaccurate; but on the whole to read his book is almost as good as to take the trip oneself.

THE WRONG ATTITUDE: A BAD BOY AT A GOOD SCHOOL. By Chanler A. Chapman. G. P. Putman's Sons. $1.50.

Mr. Chapman has written a small but well-packed book of recollections about his brief career at an old New England school twenty years ago. Since it was on the eve of the first World War that it began, and since Mr. Chapman is a witty, wistful, and wise person, the book takes strong hold of the reader and makes him alternately laugh aloud and weep inside. The laughter is at the young man's knowledge of himself and his Tom Sawyer-like genius; the tears are at the inevitable failure of schools—as against single teachers—to feed and reward the spirit of youth. Those who know and prize the writings of the author's father, the late John Jay Chapman, will find this volume an indispensable postscript to the elder Chapman's strange and magnificent piece on the same school and the same failure a generation earlier.

DRAMA

Hardly Worth the Effort

"TO WRITE a five-act tragedy in verse is extremely difficult. Not to write a five-act tragedy in verse is, on the contrary, extremely easy." This arresting thought is attributed to a nineteenth-century diplomat exasperated by a colleague who had repeatedly taken the hard way, and I found myself meditating upon it during the dull stretches in Maxwell Anderson's new piece at the National Theater. This afforded, I may add, plenty of time to go thoroughly into the subject, and aside from the fact that "Journey to Jerusalem" is in three acts instead of five the observation seems to be the most pertinent which it is possible to make.

Mr. Anderson has already written a good many plays in verse. Some of them are, in my opinion, very good indeed, and most of the rest have at least a certain theatrical effectiveness. Even less, therefore, than the ordinary man who has never written a single play in verse would he seem to be under any compulsion to write one now unless he really had something to say or unless, failing that, he had an idea of some sort for some sort of good show. But it is exactly the *raison d'être,* the excuse for being, which seems most conspicuously lacking in "Journey to Jerusalem." Granted that an extraordinarily large proportion of those who write at all find themselves impelled sooner or later to write about Jesus, granted even that some sort of parallel between the oppressed Jews at the time of Augustus and the oppressed peoples of today is easy to draw, the fact remains that Mr. Anderson seems to have been singularly little inspired by an inspiring legend and to have found extremely little of even the obvious to suggest in drawing the parallel. He has sometimes in the past been annoyingly showy; he has never, it seems to me, been so flat and tame.

The action of the play is concerned with the period when, according to Luke, the young Jesus went with his parents to Jerusalem and was discovered by them answering the question of the men of the Sanhedrin. Mr. Anderson has no reference to the miraculous birth and seems, if I may venture into theology, to assume an Arian view of Jesus. Be that as it may, he represents the young boy as beginning to suspect that he may be the Messiah but assuming still that this

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means a triumphal leader of his people. An outlaw rebel of the hills first makes him understand that suffering, not victory, is to be his role and that his only triumph will be in the hearts of men who come after him. The youthful Jesus is terrified at first but accepts his mission in the end, and that is all.

Perhaps I should, in fairness, report that some members of the audience seemed to perceive an effectiveness in the telling of this story which was lost on me, but I failed to find much that was not merely pedestrian. Nor with the exception of Frederic Tozere as the fear-haunted Herod and Arnold Moss as the prophet-rebel did the actors seem to me to do much to make their stilted roles convincing. Only a very extraordinary child actor could have made the young Jesus either believable or more than a prig, and Sidney Lumet, with his painfully deliberate, obviously schooled speech, is not extraordinary enough. Elmer Rice has staged the piece for the Playwrights' Company with great care, but most of the scenes still suggest a minor passion play written for some parish house.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

IF YOU want to see ice-skating that is gay, imaginative, and, at least to the uninitiate, skilful beyond previous belief, nothing should keep you from "It Happens on Ice." If it's not skating at all but the presence of Joe Cook that draws you to the Center Theater, it is best to resign yourself to fleeting glimpses of the great zany. Then you can enjoy the color and lively grace of the ice show and accept as an extra-special treat the rare appearances of the little man whose ingratiating smile is more illuminating than the neon tubing which lights up his lion-tamer's coat.

R. B.

RECORDS

MY COMMENTS on the unpleasant sound of the orchestra in Columbia's September recordings of Brahms's Second and Dvorak's "New World" Symphonies brought an explanation from Columbia that the recordings had been made in a way that had been thought up to compensate for the way they would be played. That is, since most people cannot stand needle-scratch and turn the treble-control on their machine down to the point where scratch is eliminated, Columbia had greatly strengthened the high vibration-frequencies of the music so that when the control was turned down to that point enough of them would remain audible. But since I don't mind scratch and had played the records with the treble-control up, and since my machine with treble up itself strengthened those high frequencies, I had heard them overemphasized, said Columbia; and since my treble-control happens to operate not gradually but by large steps, I could not obtain the particular setting which —according to Columbia—would make the records sound well. I report this for the information of readers who may already have or may want to acquire those Columbia records; but I must report also that I proceeded to try the records on other large machines, all equipped with a gradually variable treble-control, and one of them with a frequency response ideally suited to the curve of Columbia's recording; that the records sounded different on each machine but could not be made to sound well on any of them; that in the instance where they sounded best they were played with the treble-control not down but up, losing color and becoming muffled when it was turned down; and that on all these machines Victor records sounded excellent. I will report further that those Columbia records sounded most agreeable under the limitations of a small table phonograph—the Magnavox Concerto, the Lafayette JS-175; but that on these also they did not sound as well as the Victors.

What Columbia's well-intended experiment has done is to add one more difficulty and source of confusion to those already existing—those created by the fact that there is no standardization either of equipment or of recording. That is, recording is not done for one machine of known frequency characteristics, but for a large number of machines—large and small, good and bad —with unknown characteristics that are different and constantly changing; and there are differences and changes in the frequency curve of records, with the purpose of making them sound well on all machines. In this purpose Victor, H. M. V., and European Columbia have been more successful than American Columbia; and even on their better-sounding records one hears now and then the rattle caused by overcutting, in the attempt to produce recording loud enough for the old non-electrical machines that cannot step up volume.

These are difficulties and sources of confusion for the reviewer; since whether his machine is large or small, good or bad, what a record sounds like on this machine is different from what it will sound like on others. Reviewers who listen to records on poor machines do not have my worry about the fact that my Scott heightens not only the tonal splendor of a fine orchestral recording but the rattle due to overcutting, which may not be heard on a machine of limited frequency range. I may assume that what sounds well on my Scott will sound well on other machines; but I can't be sure that what sounds bad in my home will sound bad elsewhere. And so, having spent a lot of time taking some October American Columbias around to different machines, I can say only that on these machines they were not equal to good Victors. The best of the group was the recording of Stravinsky's superb performance—superb, at any rate, up to the feeble concluding phrase—of his "Sacre du printemps" with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony (Set 417, $4.50). Less good —though better than his September recording of Dvorak's "New World"— was that of Stokowski's excessively hard-driving performance of Ravel's "Bolero" with the American Youth Orchestra (X-174, $2). Worst was the recording of Bach's fine D minor Concerto, arranged for violin from the work for clavier recorded by Edwin Fischer, and with the solo part played magnificently by Szigeti with the New Friends Orchestra under Stiedry (Set 418, $3.50).

In addition Columbia offers a good performance of Sibelius's enjoyable "Swan of Tuonela" by the Chicago Symphony under Stock (11388, $1), which sounds very well on the record—possibly because the music is quiet and muted, or possibly because it was recorded before Columbia's experiment. And an excellent performance of Mendelssohn's unimportant "Ruy Blas" Overture (70352-D, $1), which sounds so well because it was recorded by Beecham with the London Philharmonic.

Singing, playing, and recording in the National Committee for Music Appreciation's set of "Aida" are coarse-grained and noisy; and it is hard to imagine anything that would do a better job of obscuring the beauty of the music for someone who does not know it.

B. H. HAGGIN

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Letters to the Editors

Creative Faith Called for

Dear Sirs: Your issue of August 31 moves me to a protest. The articles by Mr. Malcolmson and Mr. Frank illustrate in extreme form, it seems to me, the low emotional ebb of our democratic faith. Here is defeatism suggesting to itself defeat.

When our liberal press joins the chorus of "what's the use? Hitler has us beaten before we start," it promotes the very psychological inner betrayal that Hitler has used so successfully to defeat democracy. Your own fine editorials have none of this defeatism, but the bulk of your contributors certainly lack the emotive power of a strong faith.

Why do you not offer even a page or two in each issue to those who believe strongly in the creative energy of courage, faith, and democratic cooperation? At times of crisis such as this we need bold, reiterated suggestions that democracy is based on positive creative forces and that fear and avoidance of evil are unsuitable as leading motives in democracy's crisis. The totalitarians cannot build a new order based on destructive motives. As soon as reconstruction begins they will have to unlearn the deep instincts Hitler and Goebbels and Stalin have so passionately taught them. They will have to reverse themselves emotionally and accept democracy's creative faith.

We must not hesitate now to speak to our people of the great role that spiritual faith plays in all historical crises. The future of democracy depends now on the driving power of our emotional convictions. At times of active crisis logic and reason cannot effectively oppose emotion or substitute for it. At such times we live as we feel, not as we think. When I say "spiritual faith" I do not refer to any form of sectarian religious belief. I mean the simple faith that the principle of love is the master partner of creative life and the principle of fear-hate its necessary but destructive servant and scavenger.

We cannot reason or appease the totalitarians out of their destructive course. We must simply love democracy and justice and human brotherhood with more emotional power than they hate it. We must be as willing to die for that love as they are for their hate.

If this power of creative suggestion has even a grain of truth and hope in it, then you should open your pages to those who have such a faith to offer our people. There are better men than I to make such an appeal, in wiser, more impassioned words; for God's sake seek them out and give them audience in every issue! Do not again tell us so bleakly that our forefathers' creative work is at last bankrupted by our ease-loving cowardice. LEWIS A. RILEY

Leonia, N. J., October 9

Good Hunting!

Dear Sirs: England has always been a powerful and lazy country which has put its imagination into gardens, its emotional power into love of dogs, and its tremendous fighting strength into sport. Now Hitler has done us a great service. He has given us something with the cunning of a fox and the wings of a bird as an object of prey. I think it is a mistake which may prove his doom. For hundreds of years the Englishman's whole tradition has been sport. Every drop of blood in him is a hunter's, and now he is hunting in his own skies to save his own flesh and blood. I cannot tell you what a miracle is going on all round us. Our children will really become citizens of the world. They are penetrating into new homes and opening wide our narrowed island hearts. Our soldiers are being treated like equals —in many cases they are our superiors, still, what a step this is! People in air-raid shelters cannot fail to become friends and talk to each other like one family. The unbending all round is all the more thorough for being unconscious.

Churchill is using to the full, and in the right direction, his magnificent talents, and England has accepted him whole-heartedly. There is still a certain amount of dead wood from the old regime in every government office. There are still people with Nazi leanings who, if they were pinched enough, might go back to their old league with evil, but the proportion steadily dwindles. In my belief, Churchill's friendship with Bevin is one of our strongest planks. The healthy section in the Conservative Party is having its eyes opened to the right aims of the English people, and the unhealthy section is gradually being squeezed out.

This is the political situation as it is at present. If there should be a very severe catastrophe, the weak link might snap again. If, on the other hand, we get America as a democratic ally, so as to strengthen the best forces in us, I shall have no anxiety about our spiritual future. PHYLLIS BOTTOME

Bude, North Cornwall, England, September 12

Selected Negro Artillerymen

Dear Sirs: There is a little item in connection with selective service which you probably never heard of but which has some point in the present situation. I was secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People before the World War, and after receiving my commission as a captain of artillery was transferred to the 92nd Division at my own request. I found the colonel commanding the artillery brigade in a funk, saying he "never could make artillerymen out of niggers." He was short of mechanics and electricians and technical men generally. I considered the matter overnight and then told him I thought I had a solution for him.

"Here," I said, "is the problem. You have only one combat division to recruit from the draft, less than 20,000 men; but the draft all told has the cards of half a million Negroes. Among those half-million are all the automobile mechanics, electricians, machinists you possibly could want as nuclei for your gun crews and members of the headquarters company. Let me go down to Washington and see the Secretary of War and get permission to comb the draft."

"Can you do it?" he said. "I can't pay your transportation to Washington, but I'll give you leave to go down and try."

So I went to Washington at my own expense and through the Washington branch of the N. A. A. C. P. Archibald Grimke and I got an interview with Newton Baker, then Secretary of War. General Hugh Scott, Chief of Staff, was called in, and I laid my proposal before them. They approved it almost at once —Baker, of course, was always sympathetic toward the Negro—and gave the artillery of the 92nd Division authority to take 200 men per regiment from the draft. I personally combed the cards and

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forever endeared myself to my fellow-officers by including, on my own responsibility, twenty men per regiment who had been Pullman cooks. There was no grousing about the impossibility of making artillerymen out of Negroes after my selections arrived.

ROY NASH

Sacramento, Cal., October 3

Opportunity

Dear Sirs: It is unfortunate that men of the undoubted capabilities and intelligence of the WPA worker from San Francisco whose letter appeared in the September 21 issue of *The Nation* are forced to spend their time and strength in futile labor and their emotional energies in that bitter, despondent, desperate hate which alone makes possible the rise of a Hitler. Surely he must know that fascism is not the answer to the "poverty, misery, sickness, ignorance, filth, and stupidity" which he so rightfully deplores.

Some of us "liberals" have suffered the same indignities, have seen and been moved by the same stupid, unnecessary callousness to human suffering, but we have not given up hope that a legitimate, progressive American way out can yet be found. I refer to those of us who are actively participating in one of the many real cooperative movements which are gradually gaining prominence in the United States. Oscar N. Hult, the manager of our cooperative, the Bluox Lumber Cooperative of Cheshire, Oregon, authorizes me to offer the writer of that letter the opportunity to participate in our movement. If he sincerely wishes to perform useful work and to enjoy the incalculable rewards of cooperative effort he should get in touch with us.

A SATISFIED MEMBER

Cheshire, Ore., October 9

Healthy Disunity

Dear Sirs: We were rather startled to learn from the In the Wind column of September 28 that the leaders of the "Union Now" movement were trying to keep quiet "definite disunity" among us about our current policy.

This dispute was openly and freely discussed in the August and September issues of *Federal Union World*, and in the October issue Dr. Vernon Nash outlines the misgivings of the minority who disagree with Streit's present point of view.

You will agree, we believe, that such disagreement, openly discussed, is a sign of health and democracy in the movement rather than of weakness. There is no "party line" here. The minority is free to voice its opinion, and the majority rules.

And is Britain the only nation left to unite with? In the proposed Union Canada, Eire, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa would enter, if they chose, as separate nations, on the same footing as the United States and Great Britain. Moreover, as a token of hope to all the conquered or captive Scandinavian peoples and because it is a democracy, Iceland should also be included in the original founding nucleus Union.

WILLIAM P. BLAKE,
Secretary, Federal Union

New York, October 3

Refugees from New York

Dear Sirs: Only 164 years ago it was New York City rather than London that was threatened with invasion, and then as now the situation of the women and children was causing concern. On August 17, 1776, the New York State Convention considered the following letter from General George Washington, who was then trying to hold off the armies of General Howe:

Gentlemen: When I consider that the city of New-York will, in all human probability, very soon be the scene of a bloody conflict, I cannot but view the great numbers of women and children and infirm persons remaining in it with the most melancholy concern. When the men of war passed up the river, the shrieks and cries of those poor creatures, running every way with their children, was truly distressing, and I fear will have an unhappy effect on the ears and minds of our young and inexperienced soldiery. Can no method be devised for their removal? Many doubtless are of abiity to remove themselves, but there are others in a different situation. Some provision for them afterward would also be a necessary consideration.

It would relieve me from great anxiety if your Honorable Body would immediately deliberate upon it, and form and execute some plan for their removal and relief, in which I will cooperate and assist to the utmost of my power. . . .

The convention voted to remove all women, children, and infirm persons from the city, appointed a committee to supervise the evacuation, and pledged itself to pay the expenses of removal and maintenance of those unable to pay for themselves. The story is told in "The History of Public Welfare in New York State, 1609-1866," by David M. Schneider.

OLIVE L. SAWYER

New York, October 14

Welcome Suggestions

Dear Sirs: I should like to see *The Nation* make its film reviews a weekly feature covering many more pictures. This department seems to me at least as valuable a subscriber service as the Records department. My wife and I are fond of good legitimate theater, but we see ten movies to one play, and I suspect many other *Nation* readers are in the same situation. Our problem is to get intelligent and conscientious advice on the merits of the films advertised. Newspaper reviews, being designed to reflect the standards of the great majority of newspaper readers, are unreliable.

Turning to another topic, I commend *The Nation* for publishing Maxwell Stewart's article on conscription. Apart from the excellence of his essay and the editorial rejoinder, I am all in favor of more contributions which dissent from the editorial line on whatever happens to be the crucial issue of the time. Perhaps Mr. Villard, in his role of loyal opposition, used up the weekly quota of space for dissenting contributors. Now that his page has departed, let's continue to have a flow of anti-editorial articles, and by all means the editorial replies.

EDWARD S. NEWMAN

Cleveland, Ohio, October 4

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